ON THIS DATE IN BAHÁ'Í FAITH

April

152 Historical Entries

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1 April 3. On this date in 1920, Ehsan Yarshater was born in Hamadan, Iran to a prominent Jewish Bahá'í family. The founder and editor-in-chief of the Encyclopædia Iranica, he dissociated from the Bahá'í Faith as an adult due to reasons related to restrictions imposed by Shoghi Effendi on...

2 April 6. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi cabled Indian Bahá'ís to notify him of "any new languages Esslemont's book translated since April 1949." Used in Bahá'í missionary activity, "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," has been significantly edited from its initial publication to later editions.

3 April 6. On this date in 1976, the UHJ wrote an individual "that the soul is not aided by psychotherapy" but "...through active participation in teaching efforts and in the activities of the community, and through constant effort to sacrifice for the Faith you love so well..."

4 April 6. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote "A Bahá'í who has lost his administrative rights is administratively expelled from the community and therefore is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly in the matter of laws of personal status, such as divorce..."

5 April 7. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote a Canadian Bahá'í "But he assures you this is due to a misapprehension caused by a very bad translation of the Aqdas...the laws of the Aqdas, as they will be applied in future, are really the protective framework of the New World Order..."

6 April 7. On this date in 1966, Ali-Kuli Khan (also known as Nabílu'd-Dawlih) died in Washington, D.C. An eminent Iranian Baha'i who served briefly as 'Abdu'l-Baha's English-language secretary between 1899-1901, he was appointed the Iranian chargés d'affaires in Washington in 1910.

7 April 8. On this date in 1922, Bahíyyih Khánum "wrote a general letter to the friends...'Since the ascension of our Beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi has been moved so deeply ... that he has temporarily left these regions...'"

8 April 8. On this date in 1883, Elizabeth Hopper, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Madeira Islands, was born in Hume, New York.

9 April 8. On this date in 1960, Mason Remey, the architect of the several Bahá'í Houses of Worship who Shoghi Effendi had appointed a Hand of the Cause and President of the International Bahá'í Council, issued a written announcement claiming that he was the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

10 April 8. On this date in 1853, Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdad subsequent to his arrest and exile from Iran in the aftermath of the unsuccessful assassination attempt by some Babis of the Shah. He traveled accompanied with a representative of the Russian legation and an entourage of Russian guards

11 April 8. On this date in 1883, Carl Scheffler was born. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of the U.S. & Canada, serving as Treasurer from 1926 to 1930, as Financial Secretary from 1930 to 1934, and as Vice-Chairman from 1934 to 1938. He also traveled America to teach the Bahá'í Faith.

12 April 8. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "We all know how dark, and spiritually dead, the world is today, and how desperately it stands in need of spiritual guidance. The Bahá'ís alone, through the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, hold the key to the solution of humanity's ills..."

13 April 8. On this date in 1950, Alessandro Bausani declared his belief in the Bahá'í Faith. He was a noted Italian Orientalist and convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

14 April 8. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Before having any serious operation, you should consult more than one qualified physician."

15 April 8. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi sent "the list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and...."

16 April 9. On this date in 2008, the UHJ wrote "the Internet is a reflection of the world around us, and we find in its infinitude of pages the same competing forces of integration and disintegration that characterize the tumult in which humanity is caught up. In their use of the Internet, Bahá'ís..

17 April 9. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Very little is as yet known about the mind and its workings. But one thing is certain: Bahá'ís can and do receive a very remarkable help and protection in this world, one which often surprises their doctors very much!"

18 April 9. On this date in 1970, the UHJ wrote "Foster parents or relatives who may act in loco parentis are not required by Bahá'í law to give their consent to the marriage of the children they raise although there is no objection to the children obtaining such consent, should they wish to do so."

19 April 9. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote "It is obvious that the friends should not spend lavishly on residences and furnishings and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huqúqu'lláh. No specific text has been found exempting capital used to earn income."

20 April 9. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Guardian thinks perhaps a different approach to the aborigines might attract them; one of being interested in their lives and their folklore, and of trying to become their friend, rather than trying to change them or improve them."

21 April 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of the animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that ..."

22 April 9. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote "the women's liberation movement ...having some influence on impressionable Bahá'í young women...stress the unique position that women occupy by being members of the Bahá'í Faith particularly through participation in the administration...."

23 April 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice..."

24 April 9. On this date in 2018, the UHJ wrote "As you know, the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, including the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the obligatory...

25 April 9. On this date in 1908, two building plots in Wilmette were purchased by the American Bahá'í community for a future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Three years later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would lay its cornerstone during his tour of North America.

26 April 10. On this date in 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith.

27 April 10. On this date in 1973 the UHJ wrote "The consent required by the Kitab-i-Aqdas is the consent of the parents of the parties to the marriage. No one else can give this consent, and the Universal House of Justice is not empowered to change the law in any way nor to waive the requirement."

28 April 10. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote he "would specially advise you to endeavour [to] commit to memory certain passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, and in particular, some of His prayers ... also serve to considerably deepen and enrich your own spiritual life at present."

29 April 10. On this date in 2011, the UHJ wrote "The pattern of spiritual and social life taking shape in clusters that involves study circles, children's classes, junior youth groups, devotional meetings, home visits, teaching efforts, and reflection meetings, as well as Holy Day observances ...."

30 April 10. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote Pritam Singh "the realization of your inability to serve as Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly has deeply grieved his heart. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that such an able, devoted and efficient worker like you should be ..."

31 April 10. On this date in 1912, Juliet Thompson wrote in her diary "Tomorrow He comes! Who comes? "Who is this that cometh from Bozrah?" This is a night of holy expectation. The air is charged with sanctity. I can almost hear the "Gloria in Excelsis". How close He is tonight! Is it His ..."

32 April 10. On this date in 1993, Roger White, writer, editor and "poet laureate" of the Bahá'í community, died in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada.

33 April 11. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his "Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada," which is the 7th part of his "Tablets of the Divine Plan".

34 April 11. On this date in 1950, the NSA of Iran "...pamphlet be prepared over Fádil's signature, in which he repudiated 37 points of his Táríkh Zuhúru'l-Haqq, vol. 3, that differed in detail from Nabíl...this concern with his history resulted in none of the other volumes being published..."

35 April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote Hermann Grossmann "once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, nested in the Prophet, passed on to the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the assemblies and creates order based on obedience"

36 April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The completion of the Mother Temple of the West, the sacredness of which neither the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, nor any future House of Worship to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, in any country, at any future date..

37 April 11. On this date in 1997, an NSA asked the UHJ "regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups" who noted "Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom ..."

38 April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote he "has been considerably disturbed by the inharmony that has arisen in Germany...what the German Bahá'ís need--and must have--more than anything else in the world is a far deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.

39 April 12. On this date in 1873, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, later the first French Bahá'í, Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, scholar and translator, was born. The son of a prominent French Jewish family, he was converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1900 by May Bolles (later Maxwell), who was resident in Franc

40 April 12. On this date in 1912, during ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's North American tour, a newspaper article introduced him as "head of one of the newest and most thriving religions in the world, numbering 20,000,000 souls among his followers, of whom several hundred souls are in New York."

41 April 12. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... way of holiness He chose to tread to the very end of His life. Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious example can safely steer our course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and lead us on to fulfill our high destiny."

42 April 12. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "We have been brought together here by the power of His Word--you from America, I from Persia--all in love and unity of spirit. Was this possible in former centuries? If it is possible now after fifty years of sacrifice and teaching, what shall ..."

43 April 12. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Do you appreciate the Day in which you live? This is the century of the Blessed Perfection! This is the cycle of the light of His beauty! This is the consummate day of all the Prophets! These are the days of seed sowing. These are the days of ..."

44 April 12. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi and Ruhi Afnan addressed a letter to Louise Drake Wright, concerning her pioneering to Holland and noting that J.E. Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" "is being translated into fifteen additional languages!"

45 April 13. On this date in 1983, Arnold Zonneveld died in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Born in 1933 in the Netherlands, he became a Bahá'í in 1961, and spent 22 of his next 23 years pioneering. He was survived by his wife and six children.

46 April 13. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question as to the changing of pronouns in Bahá'í prayers: The Guardian does not approve of such changes, either in the specific prayers or in any others. They should be read as printed without changing a single word."

47 April 13. On this date in 1919, Phoebe Hearst died. She was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

48 April 13. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Brazil "the Local Spiritual Assembly, it is indeed a divine institution, created by Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitab-i-Aqdas as the Local House of Justice."

49 April 13. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The structural basis of the Administrative Order of the Faith...been firmly laid by the champion-builders of His World Order in every state of the Great Republic of the West and in every province of the Dominion of Canada."

50 April 14. On this date in 1994, Carmen de Burafato died Celaya, Mexico. Along with her husband Samuel Burafato, she pioneered to Mexico and the two were elected to the inaugural NSA of Mexico in 1961. She also served as a Counsellor on the Continental Boards of Central America and the Americas.

51 April 14. On this date in 1995, Owen Battrick died in Tahiti. From England, he pioneered to New Caledonia, served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands as secretary, on the NSA of New Zealand as treasurer, and as an Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor for Australasia.

52 April 14. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi "in reply to a question as to whether Brahma is 'to be considered as referring to absolute diety' and Krishna 'as the Prophet of the Hindu Religion', his secretary wrote '. . . such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left..'"

53 April 14. On this date in 1966, Jessie Revell, who had been a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, died in Haifa, Israel.

54 April 14. On this date in 1897, Ethel Revell was born. She was a member of the International Bahá'í Council serving as both an elected and appointed member. Ethel was the daughter of Mary J. Revell, known as Mother Revell for her role in founding the Bahá'í community of Philadelphia.

55 April 14. On this date in 1980, the NSA of Germany wrote the UHJ concerning a newspaper's publishing a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer authored "Desinformation als Methode" as a refutation to Ficicchia's "Der Bahá'ismus"

56 April 14. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his first public address in North America, at the Church of the Ascension, an Episcopal church in New York. The speech, widely covered in the press, was later published in the "Promulgation of Universal Peace," as "Talk at Church of the Ascension."

57 April 15. On this date in 1924, Hadi Afsahi was born in Tehran, Iran. A notable Iranian Bahá'í, he pioneered to Sweden, where he served on the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly and later as an Auxiliary Board member for the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe.

58 April 15. On this date in 1976, "The House of Justice points out that calamities have been and are occurring and will continue to happen until mankind has been chastened sufficiently to accept the Manifestation for this day."

59 April 15. On this date in 1976, the UHJ wrote that "Abdu'l-Bahá anticipated that the Lesser Peace could be established before the end of the twentieth century."

60 April 15. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "A very great responsibility for the future peace and well-being of the world is borne by the youth of today.

Let the Bahá'í youth by the power of the Cause they espouse be the shining example for their companions."

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61 April 15. On this date in 2001, the online magazine Themestream published an article titled "The Talisman Crackdown" by Karen Bacquet, who was later named as an apostate by Moojan Momen in "Marginality and Apostasy in the Bahá'í Community." For background see the ...

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62 April 15. On this date in 1890, Edward Granville Brown arrived at the Mansion of Bahjí, where he would stay for five days. During his visit he interviewed Bahá'u'lláh four times and visited with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

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63 April 15. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing "Faithless brother Husayn, after long period of dishonourable conduct, has abandoned the Master's home to consort with his sister and other Covenant-breakers." Shoghi Effendi would later chide Husayn for marrying a ...

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64 April 16. On this date in 2000, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil in reply to "a number of questions regarding resignation and membership on Regional Bahá'í Councils."

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65 April 16. On this date in 1925, Palle Bischoff was born. He was the first Danish Bahá'í to become a Baha'i in Denmark and the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Greenland. He also served on the NSA of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair and the NSA of Denmark.

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66 April 16. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote "it is necessary that Bahá'ís who intend to divorce be aware that they must consult with their Local or National Assembly, that basically a year of waiting must ensue before divorce can be effected, and that the Assembly has certain responsibilities..."

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67 April 16. On this date in 2002, an article titled "Bahai feel bashed by local media" appeared in Haaretz noting "Articles have appeared in the local and national press accusing the Bahai World Center of receiving government tax reimbursements which it is not entitled to, of having unethical...."

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68 April 16. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote "The first teacher who was careless of consolidation, instead of planting and nourishing the seeds of faith has, in fact, "inoculated" the people against the Divine Message and made subsequent teaching very much harder."

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69 April 17. On this date in 2000, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK announced "the theft of the eagle from the top of the monument to Shoghi Effendi in the New Southgate Cemetery."

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70 April 17. On this date in 1912, a headline in the "Pittsburg Times" read "Head of a New Cult," introducing 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "The venerable Persian is the head of the new Bahá'í religion,

having more than 20,000,000 followers. The belief embraces the doctrine of world-wide peace and unity of religion.

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71 April 17. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "What can control youth and save it from the pitfalls of the crass materialism of the age is the power of a genuine, constructive and living Faith such as the one revealed to the world by Bahá'u'lláh...But when true religion is combined ...."

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72 April 17. On this date in 1990, the UHJ wrote "Appointment of Continental Pioneer Committees" noting "With the rapid increase of opportunities opening at this period all over the world for teaching the Faith to the masses of humanity, it has become essential that all possible measures be taken..."

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73 April 17. On this date in 1995, the Universal House of Justice wrote an NSA "Response of Bahá'í Community to Believer Suffering from AIDS"

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74 April 17. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As regards your study of the Hindu religion..The task of converting this section of the Indian population is a most vital obligation..Nevertheless the friends should do their best to make as many converts among the Hindus as they possibly can."

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75 April 17. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Baha gave a talk at the Hotel Ansonia in New York wherein he outlined Bahá'í epistemology.

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76 April 17. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote North American Bahá'ís "My Plea, My Supreme Entreaty" stating " I feel it necessary to add a word of warning in connection with the work that has been so splendidly begun lest it should be jeopardized or frustrated."

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77 April 17. On this date in 1991, an individual wrote the UHJ with a number of questions on a several topics, including the capitalization of pronouns in Bahá'í literature and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reference to "we Muslims".

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78 April 17. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote all NSAs that "If the believer is the only one of his family who has embraced the Faith, it is his duty to endeavour to lead as many other family members as possible to the light of divine guidance."

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79 April 18. On this date in 2000, Judge Dorothy Wright Nelson, who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1967 to 2009, received the American Bar Association award for outstanding contribution to dispute resolution.

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80 April 18. On this date in 1863, William Henry Randall, a member of Baha'i Temple Unity and Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born.

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81 April 18. On this date in 1930, a letter from Ruhi Afnan and Shoghi Afnan to Agnes Alexander expressed "hopes that the translation of Dr. Esslemont's book will proceed at a rapid

pace...this book is undoubtedly the most comprehensive exposition of the Teachings yet written."

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82 April 18. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "By 'Government', on page 210 of the 'Bahá'í World' Vol. VI, is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation."

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83 April 19. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi described the relationship between the Bahá'í Cause and Administrative Order as "inseparably bound to each other, in very much the same relationship existing between the soul and body in the world of human existence."

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84 April 19. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding "the timing for the occurrence of the Lesser Peace, in light of your impression that the Bahá'í Writings anticipate its coming before the conclusion of the twentieth century; i.e., the end of December 2000.

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85 April 19. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote if "people accustomed to a lower standard of life and culture are freely admitted, and allowed unrestricted rights of commercial and industrial competition, the standard of living and culture in that country is bound to suffer."

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86 April 19. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Hawaii "about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc."

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87 April 19. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "regarding the difficulties experienced by young Bahá'í men and women in Western countries in adhering to certain of Bahá'u'lláh' s teachings."

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88 April 19. On this date in 2004, Aziz Yazdi died. He had served as an Auxiliary Board member in Africa; a Counsellor for Central and East Africa; a member of the NSA of Central and East Africa, and later of Kenya; and as one of the first members of the ITC, from 1973 to 1988.

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89 April 19. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "'Abdu'l-Baha compared the original Americans, the Indians, with the original inhabitants of Arabia. He said that the Arabs were murderers. They killed their own girl children. The urine of cattle was their perfume. But they became ..."

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90 April 20. On this date in 1958, Ahmad Sohrab died. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member of ...

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91 April 20. On this date celebrating cannabis culture, it is worth reflecting on `Abdu'l-Bahá's words: "Regarding hashish, you had pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to

its use. Gracious God! This is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed..."

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92 April 21. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "America and the Most Great Peace", a 23-page letter later included in "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh".

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93 April 21 or 22 (sources differ). On this date in 1863, the Bábis entered the Najibiyyih Garden in Baghdad in preparation for their journey to Istanbul. Because of increasing Bábi harassment of Shi'ite pilgrims, the Qajar government asked for the Bábi leadership based in Baghdad to be extradited ...

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94 April 21. On this date in 2017, the BWNS carried an article titled "Ominous wave of Yemen arrests raises alarm" stating "The baseless and nonsensical accusations levelled against the Baha'is include showing kindness and displaying rectitude of conduct in order to attract people to their Faith."

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95 April 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26, is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."

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96 April 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The word Israel, used throughout the Bible, simply refers to the Jewish people, and not to the chosen ones of this day."

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97 April 21. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice was elected for the first time.

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98 April 21. On this date in 1948, the Arab village of al-Samra, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

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99 April 22. On this date in 1998, the ITC wrote a letter stressing "the vital role that Counsellors can play in strengthening the communities to resist internal opposition. This responsibility includes identifying promising young minds, encouraging their scholarship, and providing them with..."

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100 April 22. On this date in 1991, the UHJ stated that, in following the instruction "Let him then raise his hands, and repeat three times the Greatest Name", the believer is required to raise his hands once and to repeat the Greatest Name three times in conjunction with that act..."

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101 April 22. On this date in 2013, the UHJ wrote a letter to an individual believer, having received emails "describing your struggle to reconcile the Bahá’í teachings with your own views on homosexuality, which have evolved as you have reflected on your relationship with your son."

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102 April 22. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons in Washington, D.C., starting with "See how good Bahá'u'lláh is to us, how

great the power of His Word! From what distant parts of the world He has brought us together in this house and ..."

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103 April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "Baha'u'llah established His Faith in Persia – the most decadent nation on earth. The Persians were more barbarous than the savages of Africa."

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104 April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "... the two-thirds of the earth's population spoke of in the Bible will be annihilated...The world is over-populated, and the blood of the people is impure. The retributive calamity will correct over-population problem this time."

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105 April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "A retributive calamity which will be worse than war will come. It will appear suddenly – not by degrees...Kampala will be safe – so long as they don't build American air bases in Kenya. The foothills of the Himalayas Mountains will also be safe."

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106 April 22. On this date in 2018, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article announcing the retirement of Gustavo Correa and Firaydoun Javaheri from the UHJ. The subsequent election results announced April 30 were easily predictably, and Andrej Donoval will be the next member elected to the UHJ

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107 April 23. On this date in 1999, the UHJ wrote a letter elaborating on their April 7 letter titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" noting "a campaign of internal opposition to the Teachings is currently being carried on through the use of the Internet, a communications system..."

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108 April 23. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Each phrase which one may substitute is for a particular portion of the prayer, and the instructions are quite specific where the substitutions may be made. For instance..."

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109 April 23. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a speech at Howard University, telling the audience "Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left...In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America....."

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110 April 23. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter to Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Bádí'u'lláh Khán of Abadih answering four questions: (1) re "Crimson Scroll"; (2) re the "Sacred Night"; (3) re the "Tablet of the Bell"; and (4) using the Kitab-i-Aqdas for bibliomancy.

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111 April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The friends need only read the Writings; the answers are all in them; we have no priests in this Faith to interpret or answer for us."

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112 April 23. On this date in 1963, the funeral of Israel's second President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi was held. "The first official act of the Universal House of Justice following its election at Ridvan

1963 was to send a delegation consisting of two Hands of the Cause and two members of the House of Justice...

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113 April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "In the future, when the next Manifestation appears, the Guardian of the Cause at that time will tell the believers who the Manifestation is and will call on them to accept Him. What is the use of the infallibility of the Guardian if he ..."

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114 April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "The time has come for the destruction of the world ... This is the function of fire – to burn, purify and weld. The Lesser Peace will come in the Formative Age, in this century."

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115 April 23. On this date in 1963, the First International Convention concluded in Haifa, Israel, with the election of the first Universal House of Justice by representatives of 45 Regional and National Assemblies who had gathered at the House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

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116 April 24. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article stated "Bahá'ísm now has 15,000,000 adherents scattered throughout the world, several hundred thousand of whom are in the United States and Canada."

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117 April 24. On this date in 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016.

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118 April 24. On this date in 2002, Barbara Helen Rutledge Sims died. A third generation Bahá'í, she pioneered to Japan during the first Global Crusade where she was elected a member of the inaugural National Spiritual Assemblies of North East Asia and Japan.

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119 April 24. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article covering 'Abdu'l-Bahá quoted him as saying, "The colored people of Africa were in a most terrible state of bondage, and the European powers, emulating the American altruism...you must be very grateful and must be very kind to the whites here."

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120 April 24. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís "Urgently plead fervently pray all ranks valiant forerunners Bahá'u'lláh's commonwealth may ere expiry allotted term bring fruition mission ensure ascendancy Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual sovereignty over entire western hemisphere."

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121 April 24. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote about his "unfortunate illness, amounting almost to a break-down." In February of 1926 he had written about his "anxieties and preoccupations. My mind is extremely tired and I feel I am becoming inefficient and slow due to this mental fatigue."

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122 April 24. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "There is a hierarchy in the Faith. You must not be afraid to teach the people that we have a hierarchy. In the west they do no like hierarchies, but they must understand that the Faith has a definite hierarchy."

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123 April 25. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article stated, "'Abdul Ba[h]a Abbas is the founder of a new religion which is said to already embrace 20,000,000 followers in the Orient. That makes Mrs. Eddy and Dowie and all the other new religion starters except the Mormons look like amateurs."

124 April 25. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi cabled British Bahá'ís, calling Africa a "vast dark spiritually decadent continent" needing Bahá'ís to "penetrate its heart, brighten its jungle" to enlighten "world's backward races."

125 April 25. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi "Haifa will be the terminus of a railroad line which will follow along the pipe line to Persia, thru Afghanistan to Calcutta. Another line will run from Haifa to Cairo and to the Sudan, and from there will be extended to Central Africa and to Capetown.

126 April 25. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá attended a dinner held in his honor at the Turkish Embassy by Ambassador Yusuf Ziya Pasha. The dinner is documented, among other places, in the diaries of Juliet Thompson and Agnes Parsons, who notes 'Abdu'l-Bahá "likened the Ambassador to the sun."

127 April 25. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "You can teach the Faith to the African Moslems – because they are still pure-hearted and can respond. But the Indian Moslems and the Arab Moslems are our potential enemies and are to be avoided."

128 April 26. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi cabled North American Bahá'ís, listing Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, and calling them "religiously intolerant, socially backward, climatically inhospitable."

129 April 26. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If the younger Bahá'í generation... that the Master has laid the tremendous work of teaching. They are the ones to raise the call of the Kingdom and arouse the people from slumber. If they fail the Cause is doomed to stagnation..."

130 April 27. On this date in 1958, the Custodians cabled all Bahá'ís announcing the death of Ahmad Sohrab, "striking evidence (of) God's avenging wrath." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter, he formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith, and died at 68 years old.

131 April 27. On this date in 1995, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding the development of a Bahá'í theocracy and the separation of Church and State.

132 April 28. On this date in 1960, the Custodians cabled the Continental Hands and all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding "Hand (of the) Cause Mason Remey now asserting he is Guardian (of the) Faith."

133 April 28. On this date in 1918, an article appeared in Star of the West (volume 9, number 3) titled "The Sterling Faithfulness of Esfandayar, Story told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913" recounting the story of a slave Bahá'u'lláh inherited from Mírzá Buzurg.

134 April 28. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi cabled about the death of his grandmother Munirih Khanum (wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá). By the time of his death in 1957, Shoghi Effendi had declared all of Munirih Khanum's grandchildren, meaning all of his siblings and first cousins, Covenant-breakers.

135 April 28. On this date in 2001, Farzam Arbab gave a talk titled "Intensive Growth Programs" as part of a two-day seminar on the Five Year Plan sponsored by the Youth Activities Committee at the Bahá'í World Centre.

136 April 28. On this date in 2003, Hadi Afsahi died. A notable Iranian Bahá'í, he pioneered to Sweden, where he served on the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly and later as an Auxiliary Board member for the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe.

137 April 29. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote British Bahá'ís that "great patience must be used in dealing with the child-like members of some of these primitive races."

138 April 29. On this date in 1863, Bahá'u'lláh's family joined him in the Najibiyyih Garden in Baghdad in preparation for their journey to Istanbul. Because of increasing Bábi harassment of Shi'ite pilgrims, the Qajar government asked for the Bábi leadership based in Baghdad to be extradited ...

139 April 29. On this date in 1905 'Alí-Akbar Furútan was born. 'Alí-Akbar Furútan served on the NSA of Iran in 1934, as a Hand of the Cause of God and as one of the nine Custodians. He was instrumental in censoring and silencing alternative voices within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, such as...

140 April 29. On this date in 1978, the Universal House of Justice received a letter inquiring about tubal ligation, to which they responded "it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

141 April 29. On this date in 1818, Czar Alexander II was born. In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús, praising him as "His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection ..."

142 April 29. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi placed "a fragment of plaster from the ceiling of the Báb's prison cell in the Castle of Mah-Ku beneath the gilded tiles of the dome of the Shrine."

143 April 29. On this date in 1997, and individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking for a clarification on the Authority of the Universal House of Justice.

144 April 29. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...it is spirit, determination, faith and devotion which bring victories into being, one after another, in Britain, and not luxury and leisure...."

145 April 29. On this date in 1921, Adib Teherzadeh was born. He served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971 and later of the NSA of the Republic of Ireland from 1972 to 1976, when he was appointed a Counsellor for Europe. From 1988 until his death in 2000 he served on the UHJ

146 Baha'i History - April 30. On this date in 1954, R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram, Bahá'í author, archivist, and composer, was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

147 April 30. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk titled "The Temple" at Bahá'í Temple Unity (the forerunner of the NSA of the U.S.), at its Convention held at the Masonic Temple in Chicago.

148 April 30. On this date in 1911, during his pilgrimage, Louis G. Gregory recorded that 'Abdu'l-Bahá blessed "tokens intended for the friends in the West," asserted that "the time fixed when the Bahá'í teachings will be accepted by all men, becoming universal" adding "... end of the first century."

149 April 30. On this date in 1987, the UHJ announced that "the Government of the State of Israel and the Bahá'í World Centre signed an international agreement whose implications—spiritual, historical, and practical—are inestimable for the rapidly evolving World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

150 April 30. On this date in 1992, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The payment of Huqúqu'lláh is a personal obligation on each Bahá'í, and it is for him to meet this obligation in accordance with his own conscience; it cannot be demanded from him by any of the institutions of the Faith."

151 April 30. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice, which had just been constituted at the conclusion of the First International Convention on April 23, 1963, addressed a letter to the First Bahá'í World Congress underway in London.

152 April 30. On this date in 2018, the Bahá'í World News Service announced "Universal House of Justice elected." The results were easily predicted, and the next member to be elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval.

APRIL 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1920, EHSAN YARSHATER WAS BORN IN HAMADAN, IRAN TO A PROMINENT JEWISH BAHÁ'Í FAMILY. THE FOUNDER AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA IRANICA, HE DISSOCIATED FROM THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AS AN ADULT DUE TO REASONS RELATED TO RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI ON...

April 3. On this date in 1920, Ehsan Yarshater was born in Hamadan, Iran to a prominent Jewish Bahá'í family. The founder and editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, he dissociated from the Bahá'í Faith as an adult due to reasons related to restrictions imposed by Shoghi Effendi on academic freedom and travel of Iranian Bahá'ís to the West.

On April 3, 1920, Ehsan Yarshater was born in Hamadan, Iran to a prominent Jewish Bahá'í family. His family was part of a group of Jewish converts from that city who during the late 19th century became the largest group of non-Muslim converts to the Bahá'í Fatih. Ehsan's father received a tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring to him as "Yarshater" (meaning "agile friend" which they choose to be their family name. Ehsan Yarshater had a long and distinguished academic career in the field of Iranian studies. He died on September 1, 2018, in California.

The following biography of PROFESSOR EHSAN YARSHATER has been taken from his personal home page, originally an account of his life and career by Professors M. Boyce of London University and G. Windfuhr of Michigan University in Acta Iranica 30, Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater, Leiden, Holland, 1990, pp. ix-xxiii.

Professor Ehsan Yarshater He was born on April 3, 1920 in Hamadan of a family which originated in Kashan. His father, a businessman, had a bent for learning, read widely and taught himself Arabic and Esperanto. His mother, a lady of great refinement, had a deep love of nature and the fine arts. She herself possessed a beautiful singing voice, and played the ney; and she inspired in her son a love of music and literature, and impressed on him also the need to study hard and become a useful member of society. But she died young, when he was only eleven, and his father a year later a a heavy double sorrow. He went then to live in Tehran with his maternal uncle, a well-known philanthropist whose benefactions included the building and endowing of the Mithaqiyya Hospital. Ehsan Yarshater's schooling had been interrupted; but in 1934 he won a scholarship to the newly opened Normal School (Danesh-sara-ye Moqaddamati). There the teacher of Persian literature, Mohammad 'Ali 'Ameri, made a deep impression on him, and by

encouraging him to memorize a great number of passages of excellent Persian poetry and prose, helped him to form his own pure and elegant style. From there a second scholarship took him to the Teachers' College, Tehran University, where he studied Persian language and literature under such outstanding scholars as Ebrahim Pour-Davud, Mohammad Taqi Bahar, Ahmad Bahmanyar, Badi' al-Zaman Foruzanfar, Sayyid Kazem 'Assar and 'Abbas Eqbal Ashtiyani. Following their courses gave him a deep knowledge of Iran's literature and history, although looking back he came to regret the lack of teaching in other languages and literatures. This gap he worked hard to fill for himself in later years. In 1941 he obtained the degree of B.A. (Licence-ès-Lettres), and began teaching at the 'Elmiyya School in Tehran; and two years later he was appointed associate director of the Normal School there. While holding these posts he studied law, obtaining a second B.A. in that subject in 1944. He then proceeded with his literary studies under the supervision of 'Ali Asghar Hekmat, and in 1947 was awarded at D. Litt. with distinction for a dissertation on "Persian poetry in the second half of the ninth century." (This was published, with some revisions, in 1955 .) He was then appointed Assistant Professor of Persian in the Faculty of Theology; but was awarded in the same year a fellowship by the British Council to study educational methods in England. When in London he called on W.B. Henning, and, swiftly appreciating the depth of his learning, resolved to abandon other plans and study pre-Islamic Iranian languages and culture with him. His interest in this field had already been awakened by Pour-Davud; but at that time the teaching available in it in Tehran was at an elementary level. He enrolled accordingly for one of the courses created by Henning at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, in Old and Middle Iranian; and years of exacting study followed, during which he had to add English and German to his knowledge of French, and to absorb analytic and critical methods of handling texts. In addition, he set himself, with energy and discernment, to learn all that he could of Western art and architecture, painting and music, using part of the vacations to travel in other European countries for this purpose. Henning himself was deeply interested at this time in the dialects of north-western Iran. In 1950 he had been able to make brief notes on one of them, to the south-west of Qazvin, and this, he thought, might prove to be a link in a long chain of related dialects, all in imminent danger of dying out . The evidence was too scanty, however, for this to be then more than a well-reasoned piece of deduction. With Henning's encouragement, Ehsan Yarshater determined to undertake the search for such dialects, and this developed into his scholarly lifework. With it he was to make a major contribution to Iranian linguistic studies, recording and analysing dialect after dialect of what he came to term the Tati-Taleshi groups, and gaining a rich store of knowledge that fully substantiated Henning's brilliant but tentative surmise. His work was much appreciated by Henning himself, who over the years provided Ehsan Yarshater with "enriching advice,

friendship and support." In 1953 Ehsan Yarshater, having obtained the degree of M.A. by examination, returned to Iran to pursue this research; but there was much else there to claim his attention. He was at once appointed lecturer in ancient Iranian languages in the Faculty of Letters at Tehran University, and assistant to Pour-Davud. Some excellent students attended his classes, and he is gratefully remembered by them, as by numerous generations of their successors, for the clarity and detail of his teaching, his patience and evenness of temper, and his concern for their progress. (Thus once, when a strike closed the university, he continuedquietly giving his courses at his own home rather than let their work be interrupted.) His standards were exacting; and conscious, with his own phenomenal memory, of the advantages of storing knowledge in the mind, he required his students to combine analytical work with some learning by heart, including passages from Old Persian inscriptions. Ehsan Yarshater found time nevertheless to embark on the first of his many field trips to study dialects; and these were to be the most enjoyable of this many scholarly undertakings, combining as they did the intellectual pleasure of discovery with the keen delight of travel to remote parts of Iran and the exploration of village life and traditions. Such travel involved, however, a considerable measure of physical hardship and hours of exacting work, during which his informants were apt to flag long before he wished to release them. In 1956 the Societé de la dialectologie iranienne was founded, with G. Redard, G. Morgenstierne and E. Benveniste as active members; and Ehsan Yarshater, as vice-president, was made responsible for supervising the recording of dialects throughout Iran. This blend of teaching, administrative duties and strenuous research would for most scholars have made up a full working life; but during his years in England Ehsan Yarshater had been forming plans to fill gaps which he had come to perceive in the cultural life of Iran; and in 1954 he took the major step of founding the Bongh-e Tarjoma va Nashr-e Ketb (Institute for the Translation and Publication of Books) . Under his direction this was to make a massive contribution in the following decades to the intellectual life of the nation. Its primary aim was to have foreign works of recognized worth translated into Persian by scholars of repute, the translations to be carefully edited and accurately printed. In the long run it was hoped that the venture would be largely self-supporting, but Ehsan Yarshater obtained initial funding from the Crown Properties. This was the first instance of his ability, as a practical visionary and skilful, patient diplomat, to obtain financial support for a nobly conceived plan. The series of translations was inaugurated with five books published simultaneously in 1955, and others followed in rapid succession, to be swiftly bought up by an appreciative readership. Although his own work lay in higher education, Ehsan Yarshater was deeply concerned with the intellectual development of children; and a year later he inaugurated three series of works for different age groups among the young, some of them translations, some original writings. These too were eagerly acquired. In 1957 he persuaded a

number of scholars, notably among them Iraj Afshar, to join him in founding the Anjoman-e Ketab (Book Society) . Its purpose was to foster interest in good publications, and its main organ was the Rahnema-ye Ketab (Book Guide), which was launched by Ehsan Yarshater that same year as a quarterly journal, with Afshar and M. Moqarrabi as associate editors. From its second year it became a monthly journal, and was expanded to include as well as book reviews articles on Persian language and literature, accounts of rare manuscripts and, latterly, surveys of current research in Iranian studies. From 1965 Afshar was editor in charge, and under his direction annual bibliographies were published of Persian printed books. The Anjoman-e Ketab also organized annual book exhibitions in Tehran, and sponsored exhibitions of Persian books abroad. With all this activity even Ehsan Yarshater was fully stretched, working as has been his wont through much of his life, a twelve to fourteen hour day. Yet he managed during these years to write a number of learned and literary articles for the journals Yahma, Mehr and Sokhan, as well as for the Bulletin of the Faculty of Letters of Tehran University. One day, meeting him in the Senate Library, Habib Yaghma'i pressed him for another article for his journal; whereupon Ehsan Yarshater, characteristically unable to refuse a friend, sat down and there and then wrote a piece which he called "The respected scholar" (Daneshmand-e mohtaram) . This, published as the leading article in Yaghma, has been twice reprinted in anthologies, and is often quoted as an admirable piece of satirical humour. For al his deep seriousness, Ehsan Yarshater has a rich vein of wit and humour, is quick to make or appreciate a jest, and breaks readily into warm, delightful laughter. Another striking facet of Ehsan Yarshater's character is his apparently effortless calm and self-control, maintained in the teeth of all the harassments that inevitably beset a man who initiates far-reaching plans, and who in the course of fulfilling them has to persuade large numbers of people, with different temperaments and interests, to cooperate and be reasonable. With this calmness goes iron resolve, once a goal has been fixed upon, and enviable powers of concentration. These struck even German scholars during a visit Ehsan Yarshater paid to Göttingen to study dialect materials there. While others came and went during the day, seeking refreshment, fresh air or relaxation, he sat on at his library desk from early till late, oblivious alike of the outer world and the inner man, working with total absorption. During the academic year 1958/59 he visited Columbia University, New York, as associate professor; and Columbia showed appreciation of his teaching by extending its invitation for a second year. Back in Iran during the summer of 1959 Ehsan Yarshater inspired the founding of a lending library by the Anjoman-e Ketab. This came to contain some 3000 books, mostly in the humanities, which people were actively encouraged to borrow, and for a time small mobile collections of books were sent to some of the poorer districts of Tehran, as well as to townships round about. When Ehsan Yarshater returned from Columbia in the summer of 1960, Pour-Davud had died, and he

was appointed to succeed his former teacher as professor of Old Persian and Avestan. In that year he attended the International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow; and the oral examination was held there of his thesis on "The Tati dialect spoken to the south of Qazvin", for which he was awarded a Ph.D. by London University. The examiners were W.B. Henning, E. Benveniste and I. Gershevitch. In the following year Ehsan Yarshater had the happiness to marry Latifeh Alvieh. The two had become friends when he returned from his studies in England in 1953, and had come to discover much in common, notably a deep devotion to Iran and its culture, and an interest in education generally. Latifeh Alvieh was then acting as cultural advisor to the United States Information Agency in Tehran; and her voluntary work included organizing and directing summer camps for schools and university students, and the first youth conference in Iran. She was founder and president of the Shahnaz Girls' Clubs, and a founding member of the National Council of the Women of Iran; and had represented various Iranian organizations at conferences in Germany, India, Ceylon and Turkey, as well as having studied for a year on a visiting fellowship in the United States of America. After their marriage she and Ehsan Yarshater, as well as pursuing their own separate but complementary activities, created together a gracious and profoundly civilized home-life, dispensing a generous hospitality which many were to enjoy over the years. Meantime Columbia University was expanding its Middle East department, and with financial help form Hagop Kevorkian had established a chair in Iranian Studies, which in 1961 Ehsan Yarshater was invited to occupy. After much hesitation, and prolonged discussions with his wife, he accepted and embarked thus on an even more arduous but richly productive period of his life. During it he worked immensely hard in New York for three-quarters of the year, and returned every long vacation to Iran to work immensely hard there. He retained the directorship of the Bongah-e Tarjoma, keeping in close touch from the United States with a secession of deputy directors; and he continued as president of the Anjoman-e Ketab, the Rahnema-ye Ketab being mainly in charge of Iraj Afshar. Each summer, after a busy university session, he found awaiting him in Tehran a quantity of matters - scholarly, administrative and financial- which demanded his attention; and a press of people impatient to discuss with him, sometimes at great length, their own particular problems. Yet even in these circumstances his first act was always to set in motion arrangements for a field trip to study yet another dialect which he had identified as little known or insufficiently explored. At Columbia University he was deeply engaged in developing undergraduate and graduate courses, teaching and supervising, and taking his full part in departmental and university duties. He was also planning volumes for a projected series of translations of Persian classical works called Persian Heritage Series. UNESCO had a similar project in hand, under the title of Persian Representative Works, but it was making little progress. In 1962 the UNESCO department

concerned proposed that their undertaking should be merged with Ehsan Yarshater's. This series was funded largely by the Bongah-e Tarjoma, with smaller contributions by UNESCO; and its agreed aim was to make "the best of Persian literary, historical and scientific texts available in the major world languages ... not only to satisfy the needs of the students of Persian history and culture, but also to respond to the demands of the intelligent reader who seeks to broaden his intellectual and artistic horizons." Under Ehsan Yarshater's direction the publication of volumes in this important new series proceeded apace. From 1964 to 1966 he was granted extended sabbatical leave, which he spent in Iran. The royal Pahlavi Foundation was established in 1964, and the prestigious Bongah-e Tarjoma was made one of its affiliates. "In editorial matters, however, the Institute continued to maintain essentially an independent stance, with the director exerting full discretion in the choice of works and the selection of authors, editors and translators in the series published under his general editorship." As well as devoting much time to the Bongah's affairs during these two years, Ehsan Yarshater brought out in two volumes his own Naqqashi-e novin (Modern Painting) . This he published under the pen-name Rahsepar, which he had used as art-critic over the years for the journal Sokhan (published by his friend P.N. Khanlari). His reason for seeking anonymity was that he regarded these writings as the fruit of an amateur interest only; but Naqqashi-e novin, reprinted in 1975, remains the only substantial work of recognized merit in Persian devoted to this subject. Chapters from it have been prescribed for classwork, and others have been included, for the quality of their writing, in Jalal Matini's Nemunahai az nathr-e fasih-e mo'aser (An Anthology of Contemporary Eloquent Persian Prose.) His dominant professional interest continued to be his dialect studies, and these two sabbatical years gave him further opportunities for intensive field work. His researches, which had begun in the 1950's with southern Tati, had been extended during the intervening years; and down to 1979 he was able to work systematically over a wide area, which included Taleshi-speaking districts on the west Caspian coast, Khalkhal and Tarom in Azerbaijan, Kho'in and the Zanjan region, Rudbar, Kuhpaya and Alamut to the east of Qazvin and Ramand to the south of it, with the Sava and Kashan districts, and regions yet further south where Central dialects are spoken. In recording many largely unknown or ill-explored village dialects of this area Ehsan Yarshater has shown great exactness and analytical skill, and his attention to detail in both phonology and morphology makes his work outstanding among recent contributions to Iranian dialectology, setting him in the great tradition of Andreas and Mann, Zhukovsky, Christensen and Morgenstierne. He is never a reductionist, nor one to gloss over problems by superimposing a phoneme where there is variation; and with his care for detail he truly shows language at work. His descriptions are full of precise observations about differences in usage between speakers of different ages, and even between inhabitants of different quarters of the

same village; and where documents exist he has studied the changes between earlier and modern speech. He sets this minute recording in a wider context by consistently noting similarities between dialects and dialect-groups; and he has traced changes (as for example in postpositional patterns) which may reflect usages in the Turkish superstratum. He observes moreover the ways of life and social interactions which tend to bring about linguistic interference such as by Turkic with Iranian, or by one form of Iranian with another. No description of an Iranian dialect offers a more delicate analysis of intricate relationships (such as morphological case, number and gender-marking in relation to the scales of animacy, reference and thematicity) than his study of southern Tati; and this makes it ideal for use in typological studies and general works on variation and language change . Nor is there anything comparable to his study of gender in the dialects of the Kashan area, with its admirable analysis of the multiple parameters, only a few of which have ever attracted the attention of researchers. The same precision and depth characterize his coverage of whole areas and his attention to minute difference between closely related dialects; and this has then enabled him to trace the network of linguistic change on a micro-scale. On a larger scale his work has been nothing less than the rediscovery of the descendants of ancient Median, long thought wholly to have disappeared. He named his book on southern Tati "Median Dialect Studies I", and convincingly justified this title by his masterly summary of what is known of the languages of Azarbaijan in the Middle Ages and pre-modern times. This study included in fact Greater Media with Media Atropatene; and in it he showed that it had been wrong to suppose that the Iranian dialects spoken within Azarbaijan were immigrant ones from other regions . Instead he was able to establish that the dialects which he had studied reflect a linguistic continuum from Azarbaijan southward to where the Taleshi dialects join the northernmost Tati ones, with the southernmost Tati ones then linking up in their turn with those of the central dialects. He also discovered the importance within this continuum of the Iranian dialects spoken by local Jewish communities, which he studied extensively in Tehran, Hamadan, Isfahan, Kashan, Golpayegan and other towns, together with the "secret" Perso-Aramaic language which some of them used. His conclusion was that "the Jewish dialects and sub-dialects are the indicators of Median dialects long forced out from urban centers by Persian. In other words, whereas Persian is the intruder in Western and Central Persia (that is, the Median territory) the Jewish dialects are native." His researches as a whole led him to the major discovery that some western Iranian dialects are as conservative as some eastern Iranian ones, and that the traditional perception (based essentially on Middle Persian, Parthian and modern Persian with its variants) of a morphologically wanting western Iranian is misleading, this being in fact by no means typical. It seems very fitting that an Iranian scholar from Hamadan, once the capital of Media, should have discovered these remarkable facts, and

should by his labours have thrown so much new light on the linguistic heritage of western Iran. This important and prolonged research continued to be interwoven by Ehsan Yarshater with his work at Columbia University, to which he returned in the late summer of 1966. Soon afterwards he established a Center for Iranian Studies there, of which he continues to be the director; and the next year he organized a major conference on all aspects of contemporary Iranian life, together with an exhibition of Persian painting ‹ the most extensive that had then been held. The conference papers were edited by him, and were published in 1971 under the title Iran Faces the Seventies. In 1968, Ehsan Yarshater was elected chairman of the Middle East department, and served in this capacity until 1973, when he resigned in order to be able to devote more time to developing the activities of the Center. Meantime in Iran the Bongah-e Tarjoma, still under his direction, continued to be vigorously active. The first "Foreign Literature Series" (Majmu'a-ye adabiyat-e khareji) was in the end to contain 71 works, and the various series for children and young readers, together, 155 titles. To these had been added an "Iranology Series" (Majmu'a-ye Iran-shenasi), which consisted of translations of works by Western orientalists and classical writers, and by Muslim historians and geographers in Arabic. This comprised some 60 volumes. There was also a "Persian Texts Series", devoted to critical editions of Persian texts which were either unpublished or available only in uncritical editions. This series, which reached 48 volumes, " represented the first attempt in Iran to publish Persian texts systematically. It adopted, under Yarshater's general editorship, the common method of critical editions in the West, best exemplified in Iran by M. Qazvivi, with the manuscripts clearly defined and the significant variants recorded in the footnotes." A general knowledge series was also launched, which consisted primarily of works of popular science, and which reached 138 volumes; but after the early ones had appeared Ehsan Yarshater relinquished its general editorship to Mohammad Sa'idi. Another important scholarly series was of bibliographies. This was initiated in 1958 with the publication of the "Bibliography of Persian Printed Books" (Fehrest-e ketabha-ye chapi-e farsi) by Khanbaba Moshar. A second volume appeared in 1961, and a three-volumed second edition in 1973. There were moreover a number of other series, for science, art, history and philosophy, which were begun later and so remained less extensive than the earlier ones. In 1969 the Bongah adopted a proposal put forward by Ehsan Yarshater to translate into Persian the second edition of the "Encyclopaedia of Islam", with supplementary articles to be specially commissioned to expand the entries on Iran. The first fascicle of the "Encyclopaedia of Iran and Islam" (Danesh-nama-ye Iran va Eslam) was published in 1975 with 112 original entries and 99 translated from the "Encyclopaedia of Islam"'s and eight more fascicles appeared during the next three years. Meanwhile, in 1972, Ehsan Yarshater presented to the National Endowment for the Humanities, an American federal agency, through Columbia University, a proposal for an

"Encyclopaedia Iranica" in the English language. This he conceived as a research tool, to meet the needs of scholars and students in Iranian studies and related fields by providing accurate and up-to-date presentations on "topics of archaeological,geographic, ethnographic, historical, artistic, literary, religious, linguistic, philosophical, scientific and folkloric interest," over a stretch of time extending from prehistory to the present; and he suggested that it should aim at setting Iranian culture in a broad context, and showing reciprocal influences exerted on one another by Iran and its neighbours. The plan was a noble one, and its scope so huge that probably no individual scholar could have won a hearing for it other than Ehsan Yarshater, who already had so many massive achievements to his credit, and who was known not only for initiating but also for carrying through large undertakings. He was also a persuasive advocate; and not only did the National Endowment for the Humanities provide some funding but generous support was offered by the Iranian Plan Organization. Accordingly the great undertaking got under way, and the first contracts were signed with contributors in 1979. Two years earlier Ehsan Yarshater and his wife had decided to use their private means to endow a foundation that would ensure that work on the Encyclopaedia and other major projects which he had initiated could continue after him. By 1979 the legal work had been completed, trustees were appointed, and the foundation was about to be registered with the Ministry of Justice when revolution broke out in Iran. The work of the Bongah-e Tarjoma, which was affiliated with the Pahlavi Foundation, was brought to an immediate halt. Subsequently the new government took over the Bongah, and tacitly acknowledged the admirable work which it had been doing over the previous quarter of a century by continuing to operate it under its own name. Some works were published which were already in the press (including two more fascicles of the "Encyclopaedia of Iran and Islam"). A fairly large number of the Bongah's publications were moreover reprinted in the course of time, a further tribute to the excellence of its work. Its library was also expanded by the addition of that of the Anjoman-e Ketab, which, with its journal Rahnema-ye Ketab, was closed down . But in 1981 the Bongah itself was merged, with some other organizations, in a new "Center for Scientific and Cultural Organizations," renamed in 1986 the "Scientific and Cultural Publication Company" (Markaz-e Entesharat-e 'Elmi va Farhangi). In the very year of the revolution Ehsan Yarshater had convened a meeting in England of the panel of consulting editors of the Encyclopaedia Irancia; and he found himself facing this meeting with funding for the project suddenly and drastically reduced, while he felt himself still with obligations to staff, printers and publishers, as well as to the large number of scholars who had been drawn into the undertaking, some of whom had already written contributions for it. Nevertheless, almost anyone else would have given up at this point, yielding to the force of large and unforeseen events. But for Ehsan Yarshater great odds seem only a challenge to still greater endeavour, when the cause is a worthy

one; and he resolved to continue in the hope that he could raise new funding somehow. In this he was successful, thanks to his own qualities and achievements, and tenacity of purpose. But it is a continuing struggle, which swallows up all too much of his time and energy at the expense of purely scholarly pursuits. From then on the complex and arduous work of compiling and producing the Encyclopaedia has been carried on at the Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University chiefly with the continued support of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The first fascicles were published in 1982, and by the end of 1989 three bound volumes had come out, with ten more planned to follow over the years. The undertaking has benefited from unremitting labours of a succession of assistant editors, notably among them M. Kasheff, who began working on the "Encyclopaedia of Iran and Islam", transferring without break to the Encyclopaedia Iranica; and latterly P.O. Skjaervø; but the driving force and inspiration continues to be Ehsan Yarshater, who oversees its every aspect. For this, long experience has uniquely qualified him, both on the practical and scholarly sides; and his extraordinary width of knowledge is invaluable for the choice of rubrics and invitation of contributors. There are few Persian writers and men of learning of the twentieth century whom he has not known, few Iranists whose work he has not read and remembered, perhaps no aspect of Iranian history and culture to which he has not devoted some attention. The usefulness of the Encyclopaedia is generally recognized; and it is proving not only an indispensable source of knowledge, but is itself a stimulus to research and fresh thinking on the part of scholars who are invited to contribute, and who respond to the opportunities which it provides. The heavy burdens which it lays on its chief editor have unfortunately kept his own contributions relatively few; but they have ranged characteristically widely, with a number of entries on Iranian dialects, a vivid and sympathetic account of the village of Abyana, and a meticulously documented article on Afrasiyab. He has made moreover striking contributions from his own unique knowledge to articles by others, for example to that on the great modern Persian singer Banan. Since all his labours on the Encyclopaedia have been in addition to his full-time professional work at Columbia Univesity, it seems incredible that even Ehsan Yarshater should have been engaged at the same time on another major task; but since the early 1970s he had been preparing, as general editor and contributor, the third volume of the Cambridge History of Iran, devoted to the Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian periods. This massive work, in two parts, was planned to compass "every aspect of Iranian civilisation from the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. to the advent of Islam in the seventh century A.D." There were 33 contributors, and their contributions came in irregularly over a number of years, with many delays and difficulties; and as they were assembled it became clear to Ehsan Yarshater that the enormous time span and diversity of subject-matter were going to present problems for the general reader. Accordingly

he went beyond what most would consider to be the call of editorial duty, providing the work with a long, lucid and deeply perceptive introduction, in which he provided guidelines to the whole; and he also set concise introductory pieces before each of the nine main sections into which it is divided. His own contributions comprised chapters on "Iranian common beliefs and world-view," "Iranian national history," and "Mazdakism." The volume appeared in 1983; and the first print was sold out with the same rapidity that had marked the purchase of publications of the Bongah-e Tarjoma. Just a little later yet another massive undertaking, which had been initiated by Ehsan Yarshater in 1971, began to bear fruit. This was an annotated English translation of Tabari's "History of Prophets and Kings" (Tarikh al-rusul wal moluk). Ehsan Yarshater had suggested this as a desirable enterprise to UNESCO, for consideration by its Arabic Commission; but since that commission favored other tasks, he himself undertook it, with UNESCO's approval, under the auspices of the Bongah. Only a few contracts had been signed with scholars when the Bongah was closed down, and funding had again to be sought elsewhere. It came to be provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities; and publication of the History, to be in 40 volumes, began in 1985. Seventeen volumes have by now appeared, with ten in the press. Ehsan Yarshater sometimes regrets his involvement in this work, more properly the domain of Arabists; but, again, it is not in his character to abandon a task once embarked on. The work of the Iranian Center proceeded vigorously meanwhile, and was diversified. The publication of volumes in the multilingual, multinational Persian Heritage Series continued steadily; and the Columbia Iranian Lecture Series, founded and endowed by Ehsan Yarshater in 1979, brought a succession of Iranists from other universities in the States and abroad to give an annual set of lectures. This was fittingly inaugurated by the great Iranist H.W. Bailey, and his and three other sets of lectures have so far been published in book form. Subsequently in 1987, Ehsan Yarshater established an Iranian Seminar, whose meetings are regularly attended by Iranists from New York's universities and those of neighbouring states, and often, by invitation or the chance of travel by others from farther afield. Both lectures and seminars are occasions for stimulating discussion and the fruitful sharing of knowledge. With his capacities and experience, it was inevitable that Ehsan Yarshater should be elected member of a number of councils and committees, among them the Council of Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum (from 1954); the Iranian branch of the International Council for Philosophy and the Human Sciences (of which he was general secretary from 1957 to 1961); the National Translation Council, Columbia University (from 1976); and the American Institute of Iranian Studies (trustee from 1978). One of Ehsan Yarshater's special gifts was threatened with total neglect under the huge pressure of professorial, scholarly, editorial and administrative work, namely his writing of elegant Persian; but latterly his friend Jalal Matini has persuaded him to

contribute from time to time short notes (yaddashtha) to the journals Iran Nameh and Iran Shenasi, both edited in the United States; and these have given much pleasure to its readers. All this vast amount of achievement could be accomplished only by long toil; and often after a hard day¹s work Ehsan Yarshater return in the late evening to his office at the Iran Center (which is interconnected with his apartment), to put in more hours of concentrated work at his desk there. He has been fortunate to have in his wife a lady who not only understands but supports such dedication, matching it indeed with hard work and idealism of her own. Once settled in the United States, she studied for a B.A. (1975) and M.A. (1981) at Columbia University, published articles, and applied her knowledge and experience through serving on numerous councils and committees; and from 1986 she has worked part-time at the Middle East Institute of Columbia University as co-ordinator of its Outreach Program, which aims at bringing accurate knowledge of Middle Eastern affairs to students, teachers and the general public. Events in Iran in the past decade have brought deep personal sorrows to the Yarshaters, as to many other Iranian families. These they have borne with characteristic courage and dignity. Nor is life for them ever wholly toil. There is music, poetry and the visual arts to be enjoyed; and friends and colleagues treasure memories of their delightful hospitality, with wide-ranging talk, rich reminiscences, wit and laughter. He has always been a lover of sport and the open air; and in his student days he went on long mountain walks with friends in the Alborz, and later skied there. For a long time it was mainly his dialect studies which took him from his desk; but latterly a threat of ill-health from unremitting work has forced him out of doors again for recreation. He goes regularly on long walks with the Appalachian Mountain Club, adding enjoyment of American natural beauty to his recollections of that of his much loved motherland; and it is to be hoped that with retirement he will take to the mountain trails more often, thus keeping his health and strength, and being able to see to completion the formidable enterprises which he has in hand (notably among them the publication of many notes and texts gathered during his field-work in Iran, and still to be edited). He has already made profound contributions to Persian scholarship and letters, and Iran and Iranian studies owe him immense debts. May he live to increase that indebtedness, and to enjoy the satisfaction of large tasks fulfilled and new knowledge continually gained. M. Boyce G. Windfuhr

Comments

APRIL 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1950, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED INDIAN BAHÁ'ÍS TO NOTIFY HIM OF "ANY NEW LANGUAGES ESSLEMONT'S BOOK TRANSLATED SINCE APRIL 1949." USED IN BAHÁ'Í MISSIONARY ACTIVITY, "BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE NEW ERA," HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY EDITED FROM ITS INITIAL PUBLICATION TO LATER EDITIONS.

April 6. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi cabled Indian Bahá'ís to notify him of "any new languages Esslemont's book translated since April 1949." Used in Bahá'í missionary activity, "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," has been significantly edited from its initial publication to later editions.

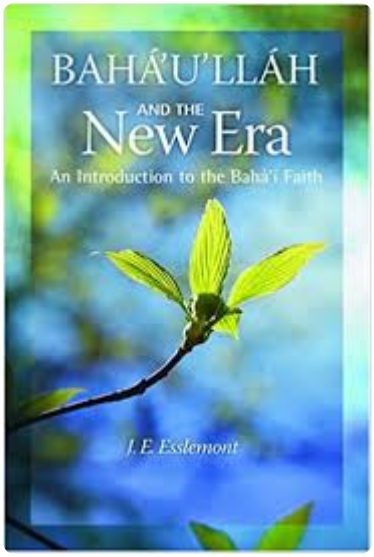
> APRIL 6, 1950
>
> CABLE NUMBER INCORPORATIONS NAMES ANY NEW LANGUAGES ESSLEMONT'S BOOK TRANSLATED SINCE APRIL 1949 ALSO PREPARE PROMPTLY AIRMAIL HAIFA UPDATE MAP SHOWING ASSEMBLIES GROUPS ISOLATED CENTRES INDIA PAKISTAN BURMA.
>
> SHOGHI

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

> Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings

will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)


BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
AND THE
New Era
An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith
J. E. Esslemont

Comments

APRIL 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, THE UHJ WROTE AN INDIVIDUAL "THAT THE SOUL IS NOT AIDED BY PSYCHOTHERAPY" BUT "...THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN TEACHING EFFORTS AND IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY, AND THROUGH CONSTANT EFFORT TO SACRIFICE FOR THE FAITH YOU LOVE SO WELL..."

April 6. On this date in 1976, the UHJ wrote an individual "...that the soul is not aided by psychotherapy" but "through active participation in teaching efforts and in the activities of the community, and through constant effort to sacrifice for the Faith you love so well..."

> 953. The Mind Can Be Helped by Professionals, but the Soul is Not Aided by Psychotherapy
>
> "With reference to the broad aspects of your problem of psychological difficulty, the House of Justice has asked us to quote the following passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh: 'Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body or mind.... When it (the soul) leaveth the body, however, it will evince such ascendancy, and reveal such influence as no force on earth can equal'. In a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian we also find the following passage: 'You must always remember, no matter how much you and others are afflicted with mental troubles ..., that your spirit is healthy, near to your Beloved, and will in the next world enjoy a happy and normal state of soul.' **Thus it is that the soul is not aided by psychotherapy.** On the other hand, in your understanding of the mental phenomena which distress you, and in your efforts to overcome your problem it is perfectly proper to consult professional experts, as your National Assembly ... advised. In another letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi by his secretary, we read the following: 'As Bahá'u'lláh has urged us to avail ourselves of the help of good physicians, Bahá'ís certainly are not only free to turn to psychiatry for assistance but should, when available, do so.' The mind, then, with all its aberrancies, may often favourably be influenced by scientifically trained persons.

"The Universal House of Justice suggests that through daily prayer, and specially by observing the daily obligatory prayers, through study of the Writings, through active participation in teaching efforts and in the activities of the community, and through constant effort to sacrifice for the Faith you love so well, you will provide a spiritual counterpart to the professional help you will receive from the experts. You should also endeavour to engage in some useful occupation, or by training yourself to have such an occupation, as work is itself another means at our disposal, in accordance with our Teachings, to draw nearer to God, and to better grasp His purpose for us in this world."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 6, 1976)

Comments

APRIL 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1982, THE UHJ WROTE "A BAHÁ'Í WHO HAS LOST HIS ADMINISTRATIVE RIGHTS IS ADMINISTRATIVELY EXPELLED FROM THE COMMUNITY AND THEREFORE IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE JURISDICTION OF THE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY IN THE MATTER OF LAWS OF PERSONAL STATUS, SUCH AS DIVORCE..."

April 6. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote "A Bahá'í who has lost his administrative rights is administratively expelled from the community and therefore is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly in the matter of laws of personal status, such as divorce..."

> 207. Loss of Voting Rights--Is to be Administratively Expelled
>
> "A Bahá'í who has lost his administrative rights is administratively expelled from the community and therefore is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Assembly in the matter of laws of personal status, such as divorce, unless, of course, he is involved in such a matter through having a Bahá'í spouse in good standing from whom the divorce is taking place. His observance of such laws is a matter of conscience and he would not be subject to further sanctions for non-observance of Bahá'í laws during the period he is without voting rights."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, April 6, 1982)

Similarly, on February 25, 1976, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to a National Spiritual Assembly stating that "A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall within the jurisdiction of a Bahá'í administrative institution."

> 199. No Bahá'í Marriage if One is Deprived of Voting Rights--A Bahá'í in Good Standing Cannot Marry One So Deprived
>
> "A Bahá'í deprived of his voting rights cannot be married in a Bahá'í marriage ceremony; a Bahá'í in good standing cannot marry a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights; the marriage of a Bahá'í who has lost his voting rights does not fall within the jurisdiction of a Bahá'í administrative institution.

"In other words, Bahá'ís who have lost their voting rights cannot be constrained to Bahá'í administrative requirements although their consciences should lead them to act as closely to the standards and ordinances of Bahá'í life as possible."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 25, 1976, cited by the International Teaching Center)

Comments

APRIL 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1947, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE A CANADIAN BAHÁ'Í "BUT HE ASSURES YOU THIS IS DUE TO A MISAPPREHENSION CAUSED BY A VERY BAD TRANSLATION OF THE AQDAS...THE LAWS OF THE AQDAS, AS THEY WILL BE APPLIED IN FUTURE, ARE REALLY THE PROTECTIVE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW WORLD ORDER..."

April 7. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote a Canadian Bahá'í "But he assures you this is due to a misapprehension caused by a very bad translation of the *Aqdas*...the laws of the *Aqdas*, as they will be applied in future, are really the protective framework of the New World Order..."

7 April 1947

To an individual believer

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your letter dated March 10th has been received, and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.

He quite understands how you feel, and you must have been shocked to find something in the teachings you love so dearly which savoured of church fines ! **But he assures you this is due to a misapprehension caused by a very bad translation of the *Aqdas*.**

The fines specified by Bahá'u'lláh are very much the same in principle as those applied by common law as a punishment for breaking the law. No one can possibly associate these necessary checks on law-breaking with a church fine of any sort.

If you study the Bahá'í teachings deeply you will see that the laws of the *Aqdas*, as they will be applied in future, are really the protective framework of the New World Order, and have nothing to do with the ecclesiastical practices of the past.

He will pray that you may become an able and gifted teacher and promoter of our beloved Faith.

With warm greetings,

R. Rabbani

Assuring you of my loving prayers for your spiritual advancement, and the success of every effort you exert for the promotion and consolidation of our beloved Faith,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

On March 5, 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book...When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable."

On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book*, some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order's authorized translation in 1992.

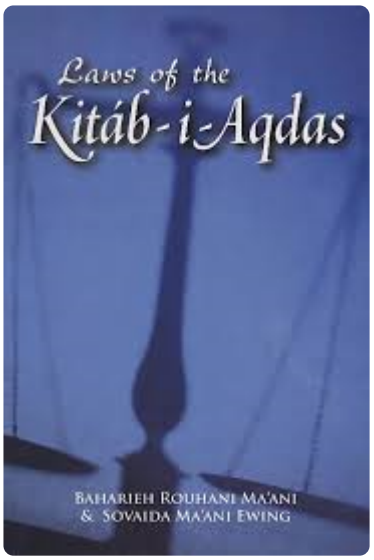
What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible.

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet.

On March 5, 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding the publication of an English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.


Laws of the
Kitáb-i-Aqdas
Baharieh Rouhani Ma'ani
& Sovaida Ma'ani Ewing

Comments

APRIL 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1966, ALI-KULI KHAN (ALSO KNOWN AS NABÍLU'D-DAWLIH) DIED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AN EMINENT IRANIAN BAHA'I WHO SERVED BRIEFLY AS 'ABDU'L-BAHA'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SECRETARY BETWEEN 1899-1901, HE WAS APPOINTED THE IRANIAN CHARGÉS D'AFFAIRES IN WASHINGTON IN 1910.

April 7. On this date in 1966, Ali-Kuli Khan (also known as Nabílu'd-Dawlih) died in Washington, D.C. An eminent Iranian Baha'i who served briefly as 'Abdu'l-Baha's English-language secretary between 1899-1901, he was subsequently sent to America where he was the first to translate into English some of the most important works of Baha'u'llah, such as the *Kitab-i-Iqan*, *The Seven Valleys* and *the Glad-Tidings*. He also continued to translate 'Abdu'l-Baha's correspondence with the American Baha'is. Ali Kuli Khan was appointed Iranian *chargés d'affaires* in Washington in 1910 and later served in various high-ranking diplomatic positions. He married Boston socialite Florence Breed and was the father of Marzieh Gail.

On July 28, 1920, Shoghi Effendi, a student at Oxford, wrote a letter to Florence Breed, wife of Ali Kuli Khan and mother of Marzieh Gail, outlining his educational ambitions at Balliol College, to study with with eminent professors and Orientalists, noting alumni who were all Imperialists.

> He was received there by the many devoted friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with genuine warmth and affection. Some of them he already knew personally, such as Dr J. E. Esslemont, who had recently been in Haifa and collaborated with him and other friends in the translation of an important Tablet of the Master; Major W. Tudor Pole, who had met 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His stay in London and had been in Palestine with the British Army of Occupation, rendering the believers every assistance within his power; and Lord Lamington.
>
> Shoghi Effendi was the bearer of letters from this grandfather to some of His English friends, as is attested in a letter he wrote shortly after his arrival to the wife of Ali Kuli Khan in France:
>
> July 28, 1920
>
> My dearest Bahá'í sister:

I have been fearfully busy since I stepped on British soil and so far the progress of my work has been admirable. Equipped with the Tablets of the Master for Lady Blomfield, Lord Lamington and Major Tudor Pole, I have through them come in close touch with eminent professors and Orientalists whether at Oxford or London University. Having secured introductions and recommendations from Sir Denison Ross, and Professor Ker, to Sir Walter Raleigh - professor of and lecturer on English literature at Oxford - and Prof. Margoliouth - the remarkable Arabic scholar and Orientalist of the same University, I hastened to Oxford after a busy week stay in London. In fact before leaving for Oxford, I had a letter from Margoliouth saying that he would do all in his power to be of help to a relative of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. With this man and the Master of Balliol College - a College from which great men such as Lord Grey, Earl Curzon, Lord Milner, Mr. Asquith, Swinburne and Sir Herbert Samuel have graduated - I had the opportunity of speaking about the Cause and clearing up some points that to these busy scholars had hitherto been uncertain and confused.

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1922, BAHÍYYIH KHÁNUM "WROTE A GENERAL LETTER TO THE FRIENDS...'SINCE THE ASCENSION OF OUR BELOVED 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SHOGHI EFFENDI HAS BEEN MOVED SO DEEPLY ... THAT HE HAS TEMPORARILY LEFT THESE REGIONS...'"

April 8. On this date in 1922, Bahíyyih Khánum "wrote a general letter to the friends...'Since the ascension of our Beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi has been moved so deeply ... that he has temporarily left these regions...'"

From the chapter titled *'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension and Its Consequences* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum writes...

> The strain of this was more than he could bear. He appointed a body of nine people to act tentatively as an Assembly and we find that on April 7, 1922, this body enters in its records that a letter has been received from the Greatest Holy Leaf in which she states that **"the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Chosen Branch, the Leader of the people of Baha, Shoghi Effendi, under the weight of sorrows and boundless grief, has been forced to leave here for a while in order to rest and recuperate, and then return to the Holy Land to render his services and discharge his responsibilities."** She goes on to say that in accordance with his letter, which she encloses, he has appointed her to administer, in consultation with the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and a chosen Assembly, all Bahá'í affairs during his absence. Shoghi Effendi had already left Haifa for Europe, on April 5th, accompanied by his eldest cousin.
>
> On April 8th the Greatest Holy Leaf wrote a general letter to the friends. She first acknowledges the letters of allegiance they have sent and says Shoghi Effendi is counting upon their co-operation in spreading the Message; the Bahá'í world must from now on be linked through the Spiritual Assemblies and local questions must be referred to them. She then goes on to say: "Since the ascension of our Beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi has been moved so deeply ... that he has sought the necessary quiet in which to meditate upon the vast task ahead of him, and it is to accomplish this that he has temporarily left these regions. During his absence he has appointed me as his representative, and while he is occupied in this great

endeavour, the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is assured that you will all strive to advance triumphantly the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh..." The typewritten letter in English is signed in Persian "Bahá'íyyih" and sealed with her seal.

It all looked very calm on paper but behind it was a raging storm in the heart and mind of Shoghi Effendi. "He has gone", the Greatest Holy Leaf wrote, "on a trip to various countries". He left with his cousin and **went to Germany to consult doctors. I remember he told me they found he had almost no reflexes, which they considered very serious.** In the wilderness, however, he found for himself a partial healing, as so many others had found before him. Some years later, in 1926, to Hippolyte Dreyfus, who had known him from childhood and whom he evidently felt he could be open with as an intimate friend, he wrote that his letter had reached him **"on my way to the Bernese Oberland which has become my second home. In the fastnesses and recesses of its alluring mountains I shall try to forget the atrocious vexations which have afflicted me for so long ... It is a matter which I greatly deplore, that in my present state of health, I feel the least inclined to, and even incapable of, any serious discussion on these vital problems with which I am confronted and with which you are already familiar. The atmosphere in Haifa is intolerable and a radical change is impracticable. The transference of my work to any other centre is unthinkable, undesirable and in the opinion of many justly scandalous ... I cannot express myself more adequately than I have for my memory has greatly suffered."**

In the early years after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, although Shoghi Effendi often travelled about Europe with the restless interest of not only a young man but **a man haunted by the ever-present, towering giants of his work and his responsibility, he returned again and again to those wild, high mountains and their lofty solitude.** In spite of his withdrawal — for that is really what this first absence from the Holy Land amounted to — the forces Shoghi Effendi had set in motion were bearing fruit. One of the returning pilgrims informed the American Bahá'í Convention, held in April 1922, that: "our visit was at the summons of Shoghi Effendi. At Haifa we met Bahá'ís from Persia, India, Burma, Egypt, Italy, England and France ... On arrival the impression that came strongly over me was that God is in His Heaven and all is well with the world ... We met Shoghi Effendi, dressed entirely in black, a touching figure. Think of what he

stands for today! **All the complex problems of the great statesmen of the world are as child's play in comparison with the great problems of this youth, before whom are the problems of the entire world ... No one can form any conception of his difficulties, which are overwhelming ... the Master is not gone. His Spirit is present with greater intensity and power ... In the center of this radiation stands this youth, Shoghi Effendi.**

The Spirit streams forth from this young man. He is indeed young in face, form and manner, yet his heart is the center of the world today. The character and spirit divine scintillate from him today. **He alone can ... save the world and make true civilization. So humble, meek, selfless is he that it is touching to see him. His letters are a marvel.** It is the great wisdom of God in granting us the countenance of this great central point of guidance to meet difficult problems. These problems, much like ours, come to him from all parts of the world. They are met and solved by him in the most informal way ... The great principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá now have their foundation in the external world of God's Kingdom on earth. This foundation is being laid, sure and certain, by Shoghi Effendi in Haifa today."

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1883, ELIZABETH HOPPER, LATER NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR PIONEERING TO THE MADEIRA ISLANDS, WAS BORN IN HUME, NEW YORK.

April 8. On this date in 1883, Elizabeth Hopper, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Madeira Islands, was born in Hume, New York.

Elizabeth Hopper was born in Hume, Allegheny County, New York. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at Cornell University, and entered the field of library science, serving for some time as senior librarian for an international agency for the United States.

Her interest in education and new ideas led her to the Bahá'í Faith. She was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C. for more then twenty years, serving it as secretary and on local and national Bahá'í committees involved with teaching and publication.

Elizabeth Hopper retired in 1952, and in 1953 she offered to go as a pioneer settler to the virgin area of the Madeira Islands. Joining her in this pioneer venture was another younger Bahá'í, Miss Ada Schott, who also volunteered to go so that Madeira would have a pioneer team to teach the Faith and establish a new community.

On September 20, 1953, Elizabeth and Ada landed in Funchal, Madeira's chief port and city, and cabled the news of their arrival. Their names were added to the World Crusade map.

By 1956 after three years of ardent prayer, patiently cultivated contacts and innumerable firesides, they were at last able to report the declaration of three new Bahá'ís in Funchal. The joy of this hard-won achievement brought new problems. They were required to leave the island temporarily before their permanent residence visas could be obtained. Then personal circumstances made it necessary for Miss Schott to return to the United States. This meant that Elizabeth was alone. She was seventy-six years of age at that time, feeling the inevitable handicaps of age, subject to bouts of discouragement, and yet impelled to continue the work of deepening, strengthening and teaching new believers and contacts. She appealed for help from additional settlers and through visitors from the accessible Bahá'í communities. There was an encouraging trickle of visitors who came and stayed for a time and added much happiness and help through their presence: Mrs. Sara Kenny and her mother, Mrs. Ella Dunffield, Mrs. Peggy True, Miss Trudy Eisenberg, Miss Katherine Meyer, Miss Elise Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Valine from

the Canaries, Mrs. Elizabeth Stamp, Mr. Missaghieh, and others. But to her great dismay no permanent settler could be found to come and stay.

During the period from 1956 to 1961 when Elizabeth was the only resident pioneer, her letters and reports to the Untied States Africa Committee unfold a moving account of the problems and situations which many pioneers must face. There was also the constant strain of communication in a language which she could not master. There were subtle barriers with which cultural differences can impair understanding and confidence. Elizabeth grieved deeply over the "spiritual drop-outs" she encountered when she had worked so hard to give a redeeming message. She also had to deal with the conflicts and confusion which can result from situations where actions and attitudes of the believers fail to uphold the moral standards and spiritual responsibilities of the Bahá'í Faith.

Only once, during this lonely period, did Elizabeth look back in anguish. In a letter to a dear friend she wrote of her loneliness and despair and wondered whether another place might have yielded better results. But in the same letter her strength of spirit was expressed for she corrected herself, writing, "...and then I have to remember that Madeira is in the Divine Plan and the Guardian wanted an Assembly there."

In this period of tests two of her most wonderful Bahá'í experiences occurred. She attended the Most Great Jubilee in London and also received permission to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. How happy these two confirming experiences made her and how much she learned from seeing the devotion of the friends who serve at the World Centre.

In 1961 a new Bahá'í pioneer arrived to spend six months. Elizabeth warmly welcome and praised Mr. Joseph Kubik who came and helped with the Bahá'í community responsibilities. Then came a new Bahá'í family from the Canaries. There was great happiness and activity for several months, and then again Elizabeth was alone.

In 1963, at the age of eighty, Elizabeth, still alone and with her hearing growing steadily worse, she was urged by friends to return to the United States. She had the courage to reply, "No, dears, I do not want to come back regardless of how difficult things are becoming."

In 1964, Mrs. Isabel Horton, who stayed with her until her end, arrived in Madeira, giving her the assurance she needed that her lifelong accumulation of Bahá'í literature and archives materials would be safely preserved.

Elizabeth Hopper died on May 3, 1967.

The Universal House of Justice in recognition of her self-sacrifice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on May 5, 1967:

> PLEASE ASSURE FRIENDS PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ELIZABETH HOPPER KNIGHT OF BAHAULLAH OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE DEVOTION STEADFASTNESS

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1960, MASON REMEY, THE ARCHITECT OF THE SEVERAL BAHÁ'Í HOUSES OF WORSHIP WHO SHOGHI EFFENDI HAD APPOINTED A HAND OF THE CAUSE AND PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL, ISSUED A WRITTEN ANNOUNCEMENT CLAIMING THAT HE WAS THE SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

On April 8, 1960, Mason Remey, the architect of the Bahá'í Houses of Worship in Uganda and Australia who Shoghi Effendi had appointed a Hand of the Cause and President of the International Bahá'í Council, issued a written announcement (also here and here) claiming that he was the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. He based his claim on the idea that by appointing him as President of the International Bahá'í Council, the embryonic form of the Universal House of Justice which would be led by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian. Mason Remey's claim was largely rejected with several notable exceptions, including five members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France lead by Joel Marangella. The remaining 26 Hands of the Cause unanimously declared Remey and whoever followed him Covenant-breakers.

PROCLAMATION TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WORLD THROUGH THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ASSEMBLED AT WILMETTE, ILLINOIS RIDVÁN 117 BAHÁ'Í ERA FROM MASON REMEY THE SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Washington, D. C. United States of America Ridván 117 BAHÁ'Í ERA

PROCLAMATION OF THE SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH ANNOUNCING HIS ADVENT INTO THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD TO ALL THE BELIEVERS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH TO BE READ BEFORE THE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED AT THE APPROACHING NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION IN AMERICA THIS CARBON COPY OF THE ORIGINAL IS NOW BEING SENT TO THE HANDS OF THE FAITH IN THE HOLY LAND IN STRICT CONFIDENCE IN ORDER THAT THIS PROCLAMATION BE KNOWN TO THEM IN ADVANCE OF ITS BEING SENT TO THE CONVENTION – THUS THESE HANDS OF THE FAITH WILL THEREFORE BE THE FIRST BELIEVERS TO HEAR THIS MESSAGE OF THE PROCLAMATION OF MASON R. GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

(CHARLES MASON REMEY)

This PROCLAMATION was first sent to The Hands of the Faith in The Holy Land before it was sent through the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of The United States of America To the Annual Convention of Bahá'ís assembled at Wilmette, Illinois RIDVÁN 117 Bahá'í Era The following letter to Charles Wolcott, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly explains this matter.

WASHINGTON 8, D.C. April 8, 1960

Mr. Charles Wolcott, Secretary National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States 356 Sheridan Road Wilmette, Illinois

Dear Charles,

Enclosed I send you my Proclamation of My Guardianship of the Bahá'í Faith. This declaration explains itself. I send this to you to be read before the Bahá'í Convention so shortly to convene at Wilmette.

I am pleased to have you letter of April 8, 1960 extending to me the invitation of your National Assembly to be present with you at your coming Annual National Convention.

I have been preparing a Proclamation communication addressed to the convention, a copy of which I enclose with this letter to you asking that this be read to the delegates seated in this convention. This document will explain itself.

If it be the wish of the convention that I go the Wilmette at this time to meet with the Bahá'ís of America and further proclaim, declare and explain my status for life as commander in chief of Bahá'í affairs of the world as I was appointed to do by our late Beloved Guardian as the Second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, I will be very pleased indeed to meet the convention.

Should the convention wish this, let them send three believers of their choice to Washington bringing me their invitation to come to them – these three representatives of the convention to usher me to the convention in waiting for me. The importance, solemnity and the dignity of the occasion in the Bahá'í Faith demands this formality.

I will be prepared to receive those three friends at the home of my sister, Miss Remey, at 2101 Connecticut Avenue, North West, Washington D.C. This delegation of three will let me know when and where I can get word to them on their arrival in Washington and they will make all arrangements for my traveling to Wilmette and for my stay while I am there as the guest of the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of this country.

Faithfully yours,

in El Abha

Mason R. Guardian

of the Bahá'í Faith

Washington, D. C. United States of America Ridván 117 BAHÁ'Í ERA

BELOVED FRIENDS:

Believers have questioned me as to my status as President of the Bahá'í International Council, appointed by The Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi, the First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. I take the means of this proclamation, to the coming annual national convention to tell all Bahá'ís exactly what my position and status is in the Faith.

The Bahá'í people the world around know that The Beloved Guardian singled me, Mason Remey, out from amongst all of the Believers upon earth to occupy the position of President of the Bahá'í International Council. This is the only position suggestive of authority that Shoghi Effendi ever bestowed upon anyone, the only special and specific appointment of authority to any man ever made by him.

The Beloved Guardian declared the Bahá'í International Council to be the forerunner of and the first step toward the establishment of The Universal House of Justice, and furthermore, that the Bahá'í International Council was the embryo of The Universal House of Justice which embryo would eventually develop into The Universal House of Justice.

Although all Bahá'ís know that I, Mason Remey, am the President of the Bahá'í International Council by the appointment of The Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi, yet many of you may not know me personally. I have been living at Haifa much of the time during these past ten years. My visits to America being in the summers when I have done but little travelling among the Bahá'í communities so personally I may be a stranger to the many recently registered in the Faith. Therefore, I will tell you something about myself.

My forebearers were early American Colonials of New England in the north and Virginia in the south. I was brought up in the Christian Faith as taught by the Episcopal Church. The members of this church, as you know, although always orthodox may be anything from Catholic upon one hand to Protestant on the other. While this church is usually classed as Protestant, its Prayer Book proclaims it to be "The Holy Catholic Apostolic Church." My inheritance was from the Catholic interpretation of Christianity rather than from the Protestant attitude.

To the average American, The Catholic Church usually means Roman Catholic, but there are other Catholic communions. In The Holy Land, that is now my home and has been for these past ten years, the Ministry of Religions of Israel lists eleven different Catholic communions in that country – Roman, Anglican, Russian, Armenian, Greek, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, etc. The Anglican Catholic Persuasion corresponding to the so called High Episcopal Church in America.

With this Catholic background it was the most logical and natural thing in the world for me to accept the Bahá'í message without question as I did when I heard it in 1899-1900 from May Ellis Bolles (later Mrs. Sutherland Maxwell), because the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church teaches the Second Coming of Christ – The Christ to come manifesting as the Lord of Creation – the Prince of Peace – coming to establish "His Kingdom upon Earth as it is in Heaven."

From New England on the north and Virginia on the south, my forebears came into the middlewest where I was born in 1874 at a town on the Mississippi River, two hundred and ten miles from Chicago, not far distant from the geographic center of the United States, this land that our Beloved Guardian has called "The Cradle of the Administration of the Bahá'í Faith." Thus do I introduce myself to those of you who may know me but by name only.

As I travel about through the Bahá'í world, the friends ask me many questions about the life of the believers in Israel, and in particular about the Hands of the Faith in The Holy Land? The Bahá'í people are just curious to know about things transpiring there and of how the problems of the Faith are being handled?

There is some general information that I can give them that is in no way confidential but I am not mentioning anything of a confidential nature to any Bahá'í because as is well known in Bahá'í circles from the first of the conclaves of the Hands the majority of the Hands of the Faith were united in the opinion that absolutely nothing said or done in these conclaves be divulged, disclosed or revealed to any of the Bahá'ís outside of the body of the twenty seven Hands. However, each Hand of the Faith is not only allowed but urged to express herself or himself with perfect freedom within the four walls of the chamber in which the Hands are gathered. It is the duty enjoined upon each of the Hands to express her or his own convictions to the Hands when seated in conclave.*

- A Conclave, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is "Any meeting for secret consultation."

I, as the President of the International Council was one of those things that every Bahá'í knows but that just never happened to be talked about nor even mentioned in any of the conclaves or in the conferences of the Hands of the Faith; therefore, as this subject was never mentioned, I,

having promised the Hands never to divulge any of their discussions, proceedings or decisions, am not breaking faith with them now by explaining to the believers about this subject of my Presidentship of the International Council a subject that was never even mentioned nor brought up for discussion by the Hands of the Faith in any conference that I ever attended or know anything about.

Before going into the subject of my Presidency of the International Council and the stand that I take in the cause and explain in this letter, I would preface my statement by giving in a few words a picture of the set up of things in Haifa under the regime of The Beloved Guardian when all the members of the International Council including the resident Hands lived there and served the Guardian daily. Each of us council members were given instructions by Shoghi Effendi of what he wanted us to do and we reported to him as these various services were underway and completed. The sole authority of all these operations rested in the instructions given to each direct from the Guardian himself, thus as a council, a functioning body, we never undertook any services of any nature whatsoever.

After the appointment of the International Council, many times one of the members would come to me saying, "Mason, you are the President of the Council, get yourself busy, call a meeting, you are the President of the Council, you should take the initiative to organize this body and do something." To which my response was always, "The Guardian of the Faith appointed the Baha'i International Council and He will tell me what I should do and when I should call the Council into action."

The First Guardian of the Faith left this world without giving me any orders or instructions whatsoever regarding the International Council. The Beloved Guardian gave me no authority to do anything about the Universal Council during his lifetime for while He was living He was the Guardian of the Faith and as infallibility then was vested in him and in him only, my position was then only that of I myself holding a potential responsibility. But with the death of Shoghi Effendi, He no longer being the center upon earth of infallibility, I became the acting President of the International Council in my own right as President of this body, thus I came into active command of the council. Therefore I am now but assuming the powers that came to me automatically upon the death of Shoghi Effendi and that have been mine exclusively of all others upon earth since the death of the First Guardian of the Faith.

This is the authority I am now exercising when I refuse to recognize any interference from anyone in the affairs of the International Council. This means from any one at all, person or persons.

The Hands of the Faith can only function as protectors of the Faith when they are serving under the direction following the commands of the infallible Guardian of the Faith. They have no authority vested in themselves as Hands of the Faith to act in their own capacity nor in any other capacity, save under the direction of the living Guardian of the Faith.

The Beloved Guardian chose me to be the President of the Bahá'í International Council that is according to his explanation the President of the Embrionic Universal House of Justice. Therefore I am the President of the Embrionic Universal House of Justice. When this August body becomes the Universal House of Justice, if such being during my lifetime, I will then be the President of the First Universal House of Justice of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Therefore, inasmuch as The Beloved Guardian in His Infallibility has thus placed me in command of the Faith to protect and to guard the Faith, I can do nothing but assume my place that he has given me with all of the responsibilities, the perquisites and emoluments that go with this position, therefore by his infallible orders I now alone after him command the cause and guard its integrity.

The delay until now of my calling the attention of the believers to the provisions for the protection and the guarding of the cause, made some years ago by our Beloved Guardian when He appointed me to be the President of the Bahá'í International Council, has given the Hands of the Faith and the believers of the Faith ample time to discover for themselves, had that been possible for them to have discovered my unique position in the Faith. But until now no one, other than I has discovered that such authority was vested in me by Our Beloved Guardian. To the moment of my sending out into the Bahá'í world of this proclamation, I have taken no one into this confidence – I have stood single and alone in all the world guarding the Faith.

That I was to occupy this august position in The Bahá'í Faith that The Beloved Guardian has chosen me to occupy, I have definitely known for the past twelve years more or less, without ever mentioning it to anyone until very recently when privately and in secret, I made this declaration to the Hands of the Faith in the Holy Land. In this proclamation statement to you I am now declaring my position of command in the cause to the Believers here in America, "The Cradle of the Administration of The Bahá'í Faith," and through this convention to all the Bahá'í World.

In this time of confusion of thought and purpose that so threatens the Bahá'í world, now is the propitious moment for me to make the announcement that I do in this writ. I cannot delay any longer. All these plans of the Hands of the Faith for 1963 that are so absorbing and confusing to the people of the Faith must be dropped and stopped immediately. I am the only one who

can command this situation so I have arisen to do so for I alone in all this world have been given the authority and the power to accomplish this.

Be it understood. I of myself make no claims for myself. I am but telling and reminding the Hands of the Faith and the Bahá'ís of all the world of the responsibilities that The Beloved Guardian placed upon me as President of the Bahá'í International Council.

It is well known throughout the Bahá'í world and accepted by all Bahá'ís that the protection of the Faith and the propagation of the Faith are special and particular functions of the Hands of the Faith, they working and serving under the direction of the Guardian of the Faith. It is from and through the Guardianship that infallibility is vested and that the Hands of the Faith receive their orders.

The Program for 1960 as announced by the Hands of the Faith in their message to the Bahá'í world of November 4, 1959 signed by twenty two of the Hands, as well as the same program announced in their former messages, so flagrantly violate and puts to naught the Will and Testament, the Guardianship, and the Administration of the Faith that the Beloved Guardian so laboriously and painstakingly built up during his long ministry, that I can no longer condone such actions upon the part of the Hands of the Faith.. I have remained silent now for over two years hoping that they would give up this destructive propagandizing but all to no effect so now it is necessary that I call a halt upon their activities.

I now command the Hands of the Faith to stop all of their preparations for 1963 and furthermore I command all believers both as individual Bahá'ís and as assemblies of Bahá'ís to immediately cease cooperating with and giving support to this fallacious program for 1963.

I have delayed as long as I dare delay before issuing this command to the Bahá'í world – I, hoping that the Hands of the Faith would see for themselves that the will and testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was being violated and that they would of themselves abandon their stand. I, standing single and alone against the entire Bahá'í world but confirmed and steadfast in my assurance of ultimately saving the cause from this calamity. My assurance is based upon the authority that The Beloved Guardian gave me as President of the Council, the authority enabling me to act and assume command of the Bahá'ís that came to me at His death.

It is meet right and timely that I should make this announcement in this convention of Bahá'ís of America which land the Beloved Guardian called the "Cradle of the Administration." I make this call here and now standing single and alone before you but fully confident of your support and cooperation in all Bahá'í matters for you understand the Administration of the Faith and that I guard it from all violation and harm.

Because the Beloved Guardian called America the Cradle of the Bahá'í Administration, the American Bahá'ís have a very special and particular responsibility to which I am calling them now at this particular time.

I expect the friends in this convention to consider with prayer and with thought this declaration addressed to them, that is a declaration to the entire Bahá'í world. I expect them to accept me without question as their Commander-in-Chief in all Bahá'í matters and to follow me so long as I live for I am the Guardian of the Faith – the Infallible Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

The line of the Guardianship of the Bahá'í Faith is unbroken for I have been the Guardian of the Faith since the death of the Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi.

At their earliest convenience the National Assembly of the United States should communicate with me so that I can arrange to receive them. Since they are the first amongst the National Assemblies to be called into spiritual action by me their responsibilities are very great for I am calling this American National Assembly first from all other National Assemblies of the world to support me in my command of the Bahá'í Cause.

Dearly Beloved Friends, seated in convention in the land of the Cradle of the Administration of the Faith, this is all that I have to tell you now at this time.

With much love to you.

Faithfully In El Abhá,

MASON R., GUARDIAN

OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

STATEMENT BY MASON REMEY GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

At the first Bahjí Conclave, the Hands of the Cause took over the management of the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith. This was followed by their repudiation of the Administration Guardianship of the Faith, This violation of the Guardianship that is the heart of the Administration of the Bahá'í Faith, is condemned by the Second Guardian of the Faith and all who follow this violation of the Bahá'í Faith are pronounced by him to be violators of the Faith for thus by this action have they severed themselves from the Bahá'í Religious Faith.

One of the first actions of these violating Hands of the Cause in this first conclave was to decree that no recorded or written records be taken of things transpiring in their conclaves. At the same time by a universally passed resolution, all were to hold in secrecy everything that transpired in those conclaves.

The Second Guardian of the Faith, then in occultation, in the capacity of a Hand of the Cause and President of the Bahá'í International Council, sat with the Hands in this conclave. He knew at that time that this violation of the Guardianship was being perpetrated, but hoping to rectify this condition through friendly argument and pacific methods he agreed with the others, to keep in strict secret with them from the Bahá'í world, all things that passed between the Hands of the Faith in their conclaves and conferences. For he hoped to be able to show them their errors and thus save them from their violation of the Faith.

Thus two and a half years or thereabouts of time passed, the while he was telling the Hands of their violation and begging them to reconsider their stand against the Guardianship – but all to fail in the end in this endeavor.

Through his forbearance, the Second Guardian of the Faith kept this pact of secrecy with the Hands of the Cause as long as it was possible to keep it, hoping that they would have a change of heart, cast aside their violations of the Faith and welcome the advent of the Second Guardian of the Faith. But when He, the Second Guardian of the Faith, found that the violations of the Hands were at the point of causing irreparable damage to the Bahá'í Faith – then he had to break with the Hands of the Faith. It was then necessary for him to make his advent as Guardian of the Faith in order to save the Faith.

Therefore when He announced to the Bahá'í World, Ridván 117 B.E. , that The Beloved First Guardian of the Faith had during his lifetime appointed him, Mason Remey, the Second Guardian of the Faith, he – for the preservation of the Faith – broke all connections with the violating Hands of the Faith and now for the safety of the Faith, he is telling and explaining to the Bahá'í world the things that the Hands of the Faith have been perpetrating against the Faith; namely their attempt to do away with the Administrative-Guardianship of the Faith, the foundation of which was given to the First Guardian of the Faith, and to the Bahá'í world in the will and testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá upon which foundation Shoghi Effendi inaugurated the Administration that the Hands of the Cause are violating.

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1853, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ARRIVED IN BAGHDAD SUBSEQUENT TO HIS ARREST AND EXILE FROM IRAN IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BY SOME BABIS OF THE SHAH. HE TRAVELED ACCOMPANIED WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN LEGATION AND AN ENTOURAGE OF RUSSIAN GUARDS

April 8. On this date in 1853, Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdad subsequent to his arrest and exile from Iran in the aftermath of the unsuccessful assassination attempt by some Babis of the Shah . Bahá'u'lláh traveled from Iran accompanied with a representative of the Russian legation and an entourage of Russian guards.

From Helen S. Goodall, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Ella Goodall Cooper's "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908," "Exile of Bahá'u'lláh"...

> When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the **Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf**, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.
>
> **Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter,** and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.
>
> The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and **an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.* *From Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to Akka--by force He was sent to the place where He desired to

be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers might have said, "Of course, He has read the prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy Land in order to mislead the people." But we see that He used the natural instruments who thought they were sending Him there by force. This is what we may call a real miracle.

After all, did the Shah accomplish his will, or did Bahá'u'lláh accomplish His Will?

From Nabil's *The Dawn-breakers*, "Chapter XXVI Attempt on the Shah's Life, and its Consequences"...

> The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and **escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.**

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi alludes to the protection the Russian ambassador gave Bahá'u'lláh on different occasions, first after the attempted assassination of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar and again after the decision to exile Bahá'u'lláh from Iran, expressing his "desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia." In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the *Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús,* praising Czar Alexander II of Russia in these terms:

> when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia)—may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him!—exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the 'ulamás of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. …His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for

the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth.

On March 20, 1949, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Karl Schuck stated that "the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!"

20 March 1949[to Dr. Karl Schuck]

Regarding your book: he feels that this can only come under the heading, judging by the outline you gave him, of a romance woven about a historical episode: **the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!** He feels, therefore, that your book should be presented as such a romance, and not in any way as a historical narrative.

There were many factors at work in releasing Bahá'u'lláh from the Siyah Chal, not the last of which was the intervention of His own sister who presented very valuable gifts to the Sháh himself while she interceded for her Brother's life. So you see your information-- not merely yours, any Bahá'ís at the present time--is far too scanty to permit of a really historical account being written. This does not mean you cannot get your book out as a romance. He certainly would not want you to destroy your manuscript!

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1883, CARL SCHEFFLER WAS BORN. AN AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í WHO SERVED ON THE NSA OF THE U.S. & CANADA, SERVING AS TREASURER FROM 1926 TO 1930, AS FINANCIAL SECRETARY FROM 1930 TO 1934, AND AS VICE-CHAIRMAN FROM 1934 TO 1938. HE ALSO TRAVELED AMERICA TO TEACH THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

April 8. On this date in 1883, Carl Scheffler was born. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of the U.S. & Canada, serving as Treasurer from 1926 to 1930, as Financial Secretary from 1930 to 1934, and as Vice-Chairman from 1934 to 1938. He also traveled America to teach the Faith, particularly to youth. In his career he was an artist, and he served as owner and Director of the Evanston Academy of Fine Arts and as Director of Art in North Evanston Public Schools.

Carl Scheffler heard of the Faith in 1897, being introduced by a cousin who had attended Ibrahim Kheiralla's class on the religion. Carl and his family attended lectures by Kheiralla, and Carl became a Bahá'í in Chicago in 1899, the 665th individual to accept the Faith in the city. He was mentored in his studies of the religion by Thornton Chase, Albert Windust, Albert Greenleaf, and others, and remained a Bahá'í after Kheiralla attempted to usurp control of the religion in the West from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which caused many early believers to leave the Faith. He studied art at Smith Academy and the Chicago Art Institute in Chicago.

In 1907 Carl went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Thornton Chase and Arthur S. Agnew and met with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who instructed them to take steps towards constructing a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the United States. After returning home he was elected to the first Chicago House of Justice, and he served as Treasurer of the body for many years. On April 9, 1908, some lots at the site of the House of Worship were purchased by the Bahá'ís in Carl's name.

From 1911 to 1912 Carl was in Europe studying at art academies, and he served as a teacher at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and established the Evanston Academy of Fine Arts after returning to America. He served as teacher at the Chicago Academy for fourteen years.

In 1915, Carl married May Thurn. She was also a Bahá'í and served on the Archives and History Committee of the United States and Canada for many years.

Carl was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada when it was established in 1925, and served on the body until 1938. As of 1925 he was Secretary of the

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. In 1926 he was elected as Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, succeeding Florence Morton, and he began preparing quarterly reports of the National Fund. As of 1927 he was serving on the Assemblies Temple Committee, as well as continuing to serve as Treasurer. As of 1928 he was no longer serving on the Temple Committee, instead serving on the Temple Maintenance Committee, the Legal Committee, and the Plan for Unified Action Committee. In 1929 he began serving on the Temple Committee again, which was then known as the Bahá'í Temple Unity

In 1930 Carl was elected to the new position of Financial Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, which was established to assume responsibility for interpreting the needs and policies of the National Fund, and deepening the Bahá'ís on its significance. In 1931 he was appointed to the Temple Program Committee. By 1933 he was serving as Chairman of the Publicity Committee. By early 1934 he was assisting the National Spiritual Assemblies Treasurer Roy Wilhelm as Assistant Treasurer. He was elected as Vice-Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1934.

In 1936 Carl spoke at a public meeting held to promote the Faith at Fisk University in Nashville, alongside Mountfort Mills and Allen B. McDaniel. In February 1937 Carl spoke at the 25th Anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America in New York. He taught the Faith through public talks on the Ohio-Indiana circuit throughout 1937. He began serving on the Teaching and Training Children Committee of the National Assembly in 1937. In 1938 he spoke at Louhelen Summer School, and he was appointed to the Louhelen Summer School Committee. In 1939 Carl, Allen McDaniel, and Rex and Mary Collison were appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly to design Bahá'í exhibits for the 1939 World Fairs, and Carl designed a portable exhibit. In October 1939 he spoke at a Memorial for Martha Root at the House of Worship.

As of 1942 Carl was serving as Chairman of the Bahá'í Exhibits Committee. In 1943 he was appointed to the Centenary Committee, responsible for organizing the celebration of the Bahá'í Centenary in 1944, and he was assigned responsibility for preparing the Temple and preparing decorations. He was also appointed as Chairman of the newly formed Committee on Elementary Education. In 1946 he assisted in a National North American Teaching Campaign, attending a meeting regarding the campaign in New Orleans and speaking at public meetings, and also giving talks in Jackson, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee, when returning to Evanston from the meeting. He spoke at a public meeting held in Denver as part of the Campaign in March 1946. In October 1946 he spoke in Minneapolis. In 1947 he spoke on the Faith at the First Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Evanston, as part of a program on Comparative

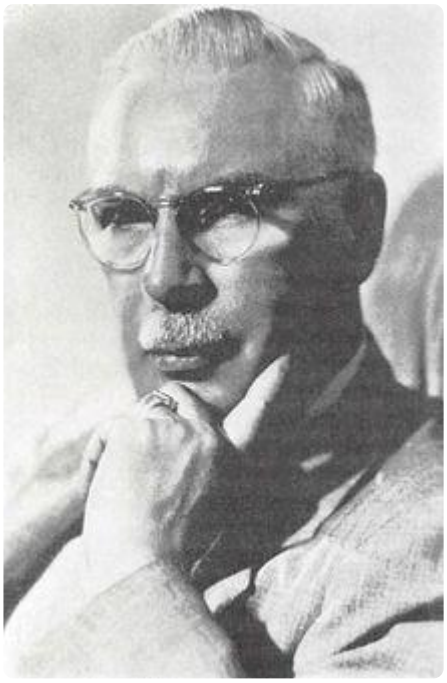
Religions. In 1948 Carl established an art studio in Chicago with his son, Harlan, which produced scratchboard drawings for advertising agencies.

In 1950 Carl was appointed to a Committee responsible for organizing the commemoration of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb. In 1953 a Bahá'í Calendar featuring illustrations of the Temple grounds by Carl was published. In August 1953 Carl recited a prayer at a memorial for Siegfried Schopflocher at the House of Worship. In 1954 another Calendar featuring Carl's illustrations of Mt. Carmel avenue was published. In 1955 a book for children featuring stories from The Dawn-Breakers and illustrations by Carl was published. In 1957 another Calendar featuring illustrations of the House of Worship by Carl was published.

Carl Scheffler died on May 17, 1962, and the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land issued the following statement:

> "Grieved passing much loved Carl Scheffler steadfast devoted tireless servant Master early days Faith America stop Outstanding services Temple Teaching administrative fields period beloved Guardian's ministry unforgettable stop Convey deepest sympathy family assure ardent prayers Holy Shrines."

Carl was survived by his wife, May Thurn, who died on February 19, 1970, and their two children, Harlan C. and Betty (later de Araujo), both of whom were active Bahá'ís.



Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1946, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "WE ALL KNOW HOW DARK, AND SPIRITUALLY DEAD, THE WORLD IS TODAY, AND HOW DESPERATELY IT STANDS IN NEED OF SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE. THE BAHÁ'ÍS ALONE, THROUGH THE MESSAGE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HOLD THE KEY TO THE SOLUTION OF HUMANITY'S ILLS..."

April 8. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "We all know how dark, and spiritually dead, the world is today, and how desperately it stands in need of spiritual guidance. The Bahá'ís alone, through the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, hold the key to the solution of humanity's ills..."

> 8 April 1946
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends:
>
> Your loving message, addressed to our beloved Guardian, brought him great joy, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.
>
> We all know how dark, and spiritually dead, the world is today, and how desperately it stands in need of spiritual guidance. The Bahá'ís alone, through the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, hold the key to the solution of humanity's ills, and as much of the tremendous work which lies ahead will perforce have to be undertaken by young people, he attaches great importance to the activities of Bahá'í Youth everywhere.
>
> He hopes you will all study deeply the teachings, as this alone will give you the foundation you need for your services to the Faith. You should also make every effort to distinguish your lives from those of other young people of your generation, and thus, by the display of Bahá'í virtues and morals, attract the interest and esteem of others.
>
> You may be sure that his loving prayers will be offered for your guidance and protection in the Holy Shrines....
>
> *In the Guardian's own handwriting:*
>
> Dearly-beloved friends:
>
> I was so pleased and thankful to receive your most welcome message, and to learn of the resumption of your activities to which I attach the utmost importance. I will

pray for your success from the depths of my heart, and urge you to get in touch, as soon as possible, with the Bahá'í Youth in various parts of the world, and to strengthen the bonds that unite you to them, and to work in close collaboration and under the supervision of your national assembly as soon as it is elected. May the Beloved bless, sustain, and guide you at all times, and crown your activities with signal success.

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1950, ALESSANDRO BAUSANI DECLARED HIS BELIEF IN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH. HE WAS A NOTED ITALIAN ORIENTALIST AND CONVERT TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

April 8. On this date in 1950, Alessandro Bausani declared his belief in the Bahá'í Faith. He was a noted Italian Orientalist and convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

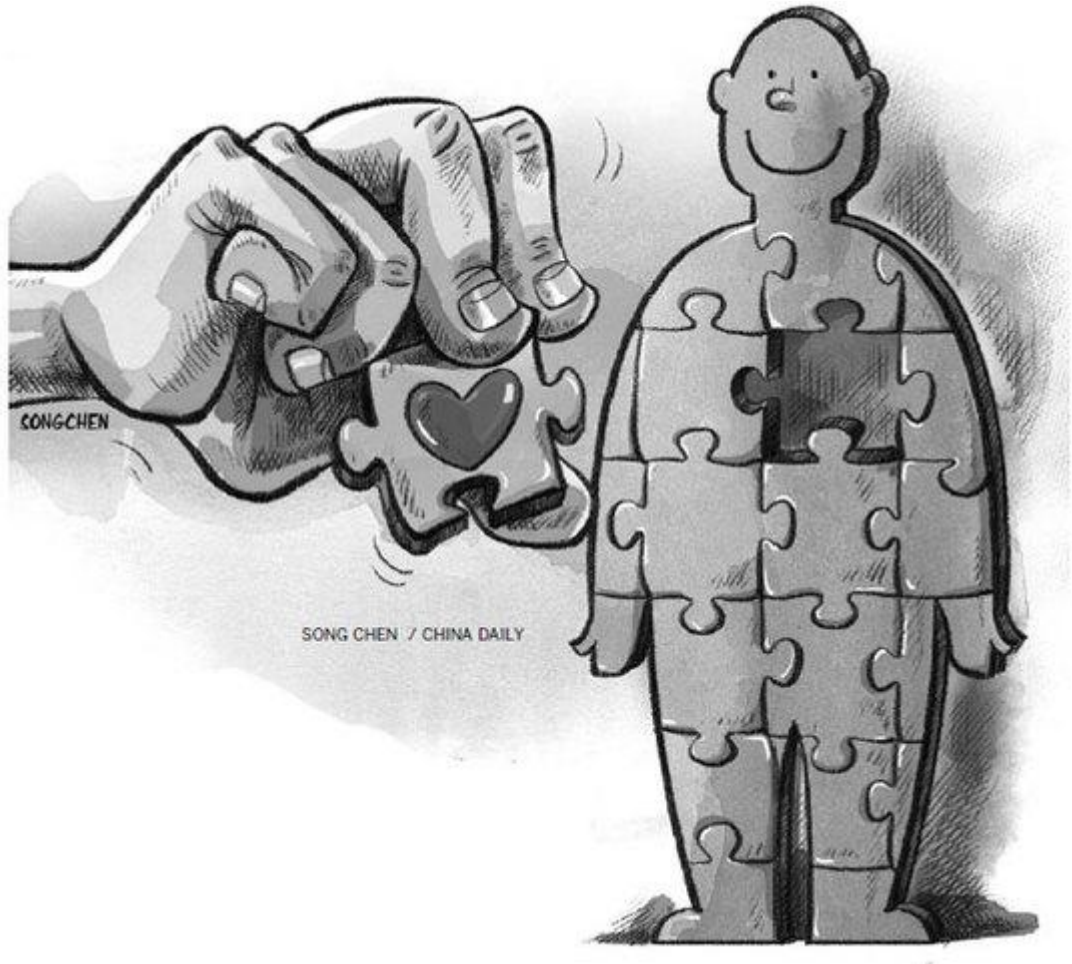
The *Encyclopædia Iranica* has an article about him.

Comments

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "BEFORE HAVING ANY SERIOUS OPERATION, YOU SHOULD CONSULT MORE THAN ONE QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN."

April 8. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Before having any serious operation, you should consult more than one qualified physician."

> 989. Before Serious Operation Consult More Than One Physician
>
> "He is pleased to see that you are feeling better, and will certainly pray for your full recovery. Before having any serious operation, you should consult more than one qualified physician."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 8, 1954)



Comments

According-Outside535: Most definitely wise advice.

APRIL 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1923, SHOGHI EFFENDI SENT "THE LIST OF THE BEST KNOWN AND MOST CURRENT BAHÁ'Í TERMS, AND OTHER ORIENTAL NAMES AND EXPRESSIONS, ALL PROPERLY AND ACCURATELY TRANSLITERATED, THE FAITHFUL SPELLING OF WHICH BY ALL THE WESTERN FRIENDS WILL AVOID CONFUSION IN FUTURE, AND...."

April 8. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi sent "the list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and insure in this matter a uniformity which is greatly needed at present in all Bahá'í literature."

The Bahá'í orthographic transliteration can often differ markedly from more common standard transliterations.

Bahá'í Orthography	**Standard Transliteration**	**Persian pronunciation**	**Arabic pronunciation**	**Perso-Arabic Spelling**
Ádhirbáyján	Azerbaijan	[ɒzeɾbɒːjˈdʒɒːn]	[ʔæðeɾbiːˈdʒæːn]	آذربایجان
Fátimih	Fatima	[fɒːteˈme]	[fɑːˈtˤɪmæ, ˈfɑːtˤɪmæ]	فاطمه
Shoghi	Shawki	[ˈʃoːɣi]	[ˈʃæwʔi, ˈʃɑwqi]	شوقی
Siyyid	Sayyid	[sejˈjed]	[ˈsæjjɪd]	سید

In English, "Bahá'í" /bəˈhaɪ/ is pronounced with two syllables according to the pronunciation guide on the Bahá'í World News Service Website (Bahá'í: Ba-HIGH). In Persian, بهائی [bæhɒːʔiː] is pronounced with three syllables. The exact realization of the English pronunciation varies. The Oxford English Dictionary has /bæˈhɑːiː/ ba-HAH-ee, Merriam-Webster has /bɑːˈhɑːiː/ bah-HAH-ee, and the Random House Dictionary has /bəˈhɑːiː/ bə-HAH-ee, all with three syllables. See *A Baha'i Glossary and Pronunciation Guide*, *"Windows to the Past Series"*, and *A Guide to Pronunciation* for more pronunciation instructions.

Letter 12

Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms

P.S. On another page [The complete list of terms is to be found in *Bahá'í World*, volume VII.] is given the list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and insure in this matter a uniformity which is greatly needed at present in all Bahá'í literature. The full code will be duly communicated to the various National Assemblies, and the transliteration of the Oriental terms mentioned in the English letters sent out by the Haifa Spiritual Assembly will provide a correct and reliable supplement to the above-mentioned list. I feel confident that all the friends will from now on follow this system and adhere scrupulously and at all times to this code in all their writings.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful, the accredited delegates to the Annual Convention of America, Chicago, Illinois.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in `Abdu'l-Bahá:

On this auspicious occasion, when the elected representatives of the Bahá'í Community throughout the continent of America, gathered for the first time within the Foundation Hall of the stately edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, are assembled to take counsel together regarding those vital issues that confront the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in that land, may I, as one of your humble fellow-workers in the field of service, offer you from the very depths of my heart my brotherly love and sincere greetings, and assure you of my fervent prayers for the success of your deliberations and the attainments of your hearts' desire.

You stand at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause at the threshold of a new era; the functions you are called upon to discharge are fraught with immense possibilities; the responsibilities you shoulder are grave and momentous; and the eyes of many peoples are turned, at this hour, towards you, expectant to behold the dawning of a Day that shall witness the fulfilment of His divine Promise.

Forgetful of the past and its vicissitudes, conscious of the need for renewed and combined effort, freed from all earthly limitations and motives, with every lingering trace of ill-feeling forever banished from our hearts, freshly united and determined, let us join in deep and silent communion with the ever-watchful Spirit of our beloved `Abdu'l-Bahá, and with humility and earnestness supplicate for the guidance that will enable us to fulfil the task which is now committed to our charge.

May this year's Convention, by the range of its activities, by the character of its proceedings, by its faithful adherence to the divine Instructions of our loving Master, and above all by its radiant spirit of enthusiasm and true fellowship, prove itself one of the greatest landmarks in the history of the Cause in America.

May the all-pervading Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh so permeate the souls of its members as to cause it to mirror forth the glories and the splendors of the Celestial Concourse.

Your devoted brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

April 8, 1923

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 2008, THE UHJ WROTE "THE INTERNET IS A REFLECTION OF THE WORLD AROUND US, AND WE FIND IN ITS INFINITUDE OF PAGES THE SAME COMPETING FORCES OF INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION THAT CHARACTERIZE THE TUMULT IN WHICH HUMANITY IS CAUGHT UP. IN THEIR USE OF THE INTERNET, BAHÁ'ÍS..

April 9. On this date in 2008, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer regarding use of the Internet, stating "It is useful to bear in mind that the Internet is a reflection of the world around us, and we find in its infinitude of pages the same competing forces of integration and disintegration that characterize the tumult in which humanity is caught up. In their use of the Internet, Bahá'ís should stand aloof from the negative forces operating within it, availing themselves of its potential to spread the Word of God and to inspire and uplift others, while ignoring any negative reactions their efforts may from time to time elicit."

April 9. On this date in 2008, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer regarding use of the Internet.

> It is useful to bear in mind that the Internet is a reflection of the world around us, and we find in its infinitude of pages the same competing forces of integration and disintegration that characterize the tumult in which humanity is caught up. In their use of the Internet, Bahá'ís should stand aloof from the negative forces operating within it, availing themselves of its potential to spread the Word of God and to inspire and uplift others, while ignoring any negative reactions their efforts may from time to time elicit.

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "VERY LITTLE IS AS YET KNOWN ABOUT THE MIND AND ITS WORKINGS. BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN: BAHÁ'ÍS CAN AND DO RECEIVE A VERY REMARKABLE HELP AND PROTECTION IN THIS WORLD, ONE WHICH OFTEN SURPRISES THEIR DOCTORS VERY MUCH!"

April 9. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Very little is as yet known about the mind and its workings. But one thing is certain: Bahá'ís can and do receive a very remarkable help and protection in this world, one which often surprises their doctors very much!"

> 947. Little is Known About the Mind and Its Workings
>
> "Very little is as yet known about the mind and its workings. But one thing is certain: Bahá'ís can and do receive a very remarkable help and protection in this world, one which often surprises their doctors very much!"
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 9, 1948: Extracts from the Guardian's Letters on Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects, p. 4)

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1970, THE UHJ WROTE "FOSTER PARENTS OR RELATIVES WHO MAY ACT IN LOCO PARENTIS ARE NOT REQUIRED BY BAHÁ'Í LAW TO GIVE THEIR CONSENT TO THE MARRIAGE OF THE CHILDREN THEY RAISE ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO OBJECTION TO THE CHILDREN OBTAINING SUCH CONSENT, SHOULD THEY WISH TO DO SO."

April 9. On this date in 1970, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Foster parents or relatives who may act in loco parentis are not required by Bahá'í law to give their consent to the marriage of the children they raise although there is no objection to the children obtaining such consent, should they wish to do so."

> Foster parents or relatives who may act in loco parentis are not required by Bahá'í law to give their consent to the marriage of the children they raise although there is no objection to the children obtaining such consent, should they wish to do so.
>
> 9 April 1970 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy.

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1980, THE UHJ WROTE "IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE FRIENDS SHOULD NOT SPEND LAVISHLY ON RESIDENCES AND FURNISHINGS AND RATIONALIZE THESE EXPENDITURES IN THEIR DESIRE TO AVOID PAYMENT OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH. NO SPECIFIC TEXT HAS BEEN FOUND EXEMPTING CAPITAL USED TO EARN INCOME."

April 9. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote "It is obvious that the friends should not spend lavishly on residences and furnishings and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huqúqu'lláh. No specific text has been found exempting capital used to earn income. The Universal House of Justice leaves such matters to the consciences of individual believers."

> It is clear from the Writings that a person is exempt from paying Huqúqu'lláh on his residence and such household and professional equipment as are needful. It is left to the discretion of the individual to decide which items are necessary and which are not. It is obvious that the friends should not spend lavishly on residences and furnishings and rationalize these expenditures in their desire to avoid payment of Huqúqu'lláh. No specific text has been found exempting capital used to earn income. The Universal House of Justice leaves such matters to the consciences of individual believers.
>
> (9 April 1980, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE GUARDIAN THINKS PERHAPS A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE ABORIGINES MIGHT ATTRACT THEM; ONE OF BEING INTERESTED IN THEIR LIVES AND THEIR FOLKLORE, AND OF TRYING TO BECOME THEIR FRIEND, RATHER THAN TRYING TO CHANGE THEM OR IMPROVE THEM."

April 9. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The Guardian thinks perhaps a different approach to the aborigines might attract them; one of being interested in their lives and their folklore, and of trying to become their friend, rather than trying to change them or improve them."

> 1990. The Guardian thinks perhaps a different approach to the aborigines might attract them; one of being interested in their lives and their folklore, and of trying to become their friend, rather than trying to change them or improve them.
>
> (From a letter dated 9 April 1955 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1923, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "...WITH UNITY OF PURPOSE AND ACTION FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN OUR MIDST, AND WITH EVERY TRACE OF THE ANIMOSITY AND MISTRUST OF THE PAST BANISHED FROM OUR HEARTS, WE SHOULD FORM ONE UNITED FRONT AND COMBAT, WISELY AND TACTFULLY, EVERY FORCE THAT ..."

April 9. On this date in 1923, Shoghi Effendi wrote American Bahá'ís "It is, I firmly believe, of the utmost urgent importance that, with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of the animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that might darken the spirit of the Movement, cause division in its ranks, and narrow it by dogmatic and sectarian belief."

Letter 13

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly. Dearest friends:

I have lately received your long-awaited reports on the present situation of the Movement in that land, and have read them all, together with their enclosures, with the utmost care and deepest interest.

I am much impressed and feel deeply gratified to learn of your devoted and unremitting labors, individually and collectively in the field of service to the Cause; of your constant vigilance and watchful care in upholding its fundamental principles and guarding its essential interests; of the efficiency, faithfulness and vigor with which you are conducting the administration of its affairs throughout that land.

Many and grave may be the obstacles, whether from within or from without, which we shall have to encounter in the days to come, but we feel sure that if we but maintain consistently before our eyes a broad and noble vision of its significance and vital necessity in these days, and above all of its universality and all-conquering power, we shall be enabled to surmount them, one and all, and by the Power of Faith, carry the Ark of the Covenant to its Haven of Safety and Triumph.

It is, I firmly believe, of the utmost urgent importance that, with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of the animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that might darken the spirit of the Movement, cause division in its ranks, and narrow it by dogmatic and sectarian belief.

National Spiritual Assemblies

It is primarily upon the elected members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world that this highly important duty devolves, as in their hands the direction and management of all spiritual Bahá'í activities have been placed and centralized, and as they constitute in the eyes of the people of their country the supreme body in that land that officially represents, promotes and safeguards the various interests of the Cause, it is my fervent prayer and my most cherished desire, that the unfailing guidance of Bahá'u'lláh and the blessings of our beloved Master will enable them to set a high and true example to all other Bahá'í institutions and local Assemblies, and will show them what absolute harmony, mature deliberation and whole-hearted cooperation can achieve.

Should such a representative and responsible body fail to realize this fundamental requisite for all successful achievement, the whole structure is sure to crumble, and the Great Plan of the Future, as unfolded by the Master's Will and Testament, will be rudely disturbed and grievously delayed.

Regarding the management of the Star of the West, as I have already intimated, this Bahá'í organ as well as other similar publications, far from being regarded as the special organ of a certain group or particular locality, should fall under the exclusive control of the National Spiritual Assembly, which, aided by a special committee, shall minutely guide and judiciously scrutinize all the information it gives, the character of the articles and translations it publishes, and the tone and language it assumes in all its issues....

Reports of Activities

I shall always await from the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, collective, official and comprehensive reports on their manifold activities, sent to me at frequent intervals, and bearing upon the inner and outward currents of the Movement, the relations of Assemblies to one another, and the general standing

and the various aspects of the progress of the Cause throughout the land. I would welcome more specific reports sent to me by the various committees of the National Spiritual Assembly, enclosed in the National Assembly's letter, and approved by all its members.

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

I have read with keen interest all the enclosures regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, have shared the up-to-date news they contained with the friends throughout the East, and note with particular pleasure the completion of the Basement Section, with its spacious Foundation Hall ready for the holding of meetings and the gatherings of friends. Though the prospect of the immediate resumption of building activity does not seem bright at present, yet I hope and pray that these difficulties will soon disappear, and the work of this unique Edifice, stimulated and advanced in time by the zeal and self-sacrifice of the friends the world over, will soon attain its glorious consummation. I beg to enclose my humble contribution of 19 pounds, as my share of the numerous donations that have reached the Temple Treasury in the past year.

Pray convey to the members of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Committee the highest sense of my appreciation for their devoted and strenuous labors, and my constant prayers for the success of the task which they have set themselves to accomplish.

With regard to the situation in Persia, and the condition of the friends in that land, I have requested the Tihrán Spiritual Assembly to send me immediately an authoritative and full report of the exact situation, whereupon I shall duly inform you of the exact steps to be taken to insure the well-being and safety of the tried believers in Persia....

The holding of State Congresses, Amity Conventions, and other universal associations of the friends in America, will naturally fall within the province of the National Spiritual Assembly, which will direct and supervise the work of them all by the aid of special committees, each constituted for a specific purpose. The matter of receiving Orientals is left entirely in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly, whose special committee for this purpose will have to investigate all the questions arising in this connection in future. Please convey to the members of the newly constituted Library Committee my deep appreciation of their labors in this important field of service, and assure them of my prayers for their success.

Touching the point raised in the Secretary's letter regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit instructions, all important and fundamental questions must be referred. At present the exact implication and full significance of the provisions of the Master's Will are as yet imperfectly understood, and time will serve to reveal the wisdom and the far-reaching effects of His words.

I am enclosing on a separate sheet the full authoritative code, widely adopted by contemporary Orientalists throughout the world, which will serve as a basis for the transliteration of Bahá'í terms and Oriental names.[See previous footnote on transliterations.]

Remembering you all in my hours of visit and prayer at the Three Holy Shrines, and wishing you success from all my heart,

I am your brother and fellow-worker,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

April 9th, 1923.

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1971, THE UHJ WROTE "THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT ...HAVING SOME INFLUENCE ON IMPRESSIONABLE BAHÁ'Í YOUNG WOMEN...STRESS THE UNIQUE POSITION THAT WOMEN OCCUPY BY BEING MEMBERS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH PARTICULARLY THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION...."

April 9. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of the US "Concerning the point you raised in your letter ... that the women's liberation movement in ... is assuming extreme positions which are having some influence on impressionable Bahá'í young women, we feel it would be helpful if your Assembly were to stress the unique position that women occupy by being members of the Bahá'í Faith particularly through participation in the administration of its affairs on both a local and national scale."

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>
> 9 April 1971 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1923, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "REGARDING THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE UNIVERSAL COURT OF ARBITRATION, THIS AND OTHER SIMILAR MATTERS WILL HAVE TO BE EXPLAINED AND ELUCIDATED BY THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE..."

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Letter 13

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Remembering you all in my hours of visit and prayer at the Three Holy Shrines, and wishing you success from all my heart,

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Haifa, Palestine.

April 9th, 1923.

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 2018, THE UHJ WROTE "AS YOU KNOW, THE ARABIC BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS ARE NOT TRANSLATED INTO THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE BASED ON GUIDANCE OF THE BELOVED GUARDIAN. THERE ARE NO AUTHORIZED PERSIAN TRANSLATIONS OF ANY OF THE ARABIC WRITINGS, INCLUDING THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AND THE OBLIGATORY...

April 9. On this date in 2018, the UHJ wrote "As you know, the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, including the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the obligatory prayers, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

> 9 April 2018
>
> Transmitted by email
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friend,
>
> The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 23 September 2015 expressing **your concern that lack of translations of Arabic Bahá'í Writings into Persian may be preventing Iranians who are not proficient in Arabic from understanding the Arabic Writings, such as the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.** We have been instructed to write to you as follows. The delay in our reply is very much regretted.
>
> Your seeking the advice of the House of Justice is warmly acknowledged. **As you know, the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, including the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the obligatory prayers, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted.** Latitude has been given, however, to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others—for instance, in the context of a study group. Moreover, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding

diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.

Your concern about the ability of Iranians to study the Bahá'í Writings is appreciated. The House of Justice has indicated that care should be taken that limitations in understanding the Arabic Writings of the Twin Manifestations of God do not become an obstacle to reaching the masses of Persian-speaking peoples, who appear to be among the most receptive populations at present. It is hoped that the measures outlined above will prove to be adequate.

Be assured of the prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that your services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh may be blessed and confirmed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Similarly, on February 1, 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

Persian translation of Arabic verses

Universal House of Justice

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

1 February 2018

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7 November 2014 about the translation of the Arabic Writings into Persian. It has considered your questions regarding this matter and has instructed us to write to you as follows. The delay in doing so is deeply regretted.

That the Arabic Bahá'í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted.
In his letters to believers in Iran, Shoghi Effendi also exhorted the friends to recite

the Obligatory Prayers in Arabic. However, drawing upon an individual's translation of these Prayers or other Tablets in order to aid one's understanding is, of course, permissible, although such personal translations should not be recited in Bahá'í gatherings. No issue should be made of what individuals do in private prayer.

Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.

In light of a number of factors, Tajik and Persian are for practical purposes treated differently.

It is hoped that the above information will be of assistance. You may rest assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Comments

APRIL 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1908, TWO BUILDING PLOTS IN WILMETTE WERE PURCHASED BY THE AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY FOR A FUTURE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR. THREE YEARS LATER, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WOULD LAY ITS CORNERSTONE DURING HIS TOUR OF NORTH AMERICA.

April 9. On this date in 1908, two building plots in Wilmette were purchased by the American Bahá'í community for a future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Three years later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would lay its cornerstone during his tour of North America.

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1919, ENGLISHMAN JOHN HENRY HYDE DUNN AND HIS IRISH WIFE CLARA HOLDER DAVIS DUNN DISEMBARKED FROM THEIR SHIP IN SYDNEY, OPENING AUSTRALIA TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

April 10. On this date in 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his Irish wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith. Perhaps the most famous Australian Bahá'í is Cathy Freeman, an Aborigine who in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics had the honor of lighting the stadium's Olympic flame in the cauldron within a circle of fire. She also carried the Australian Flag and Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 meter race at the Sydney Olympic Games. She had her **Bahá'í administrative rights suspended** for political activism on behalf of Aboriginal Australians.

It is worth remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's views on native, indigenous people and cultures.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect who would design the Shrine of the Bab and was named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Ellis Bolles Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.
>
> Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be

fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.**

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so

to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great**

metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled,

whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

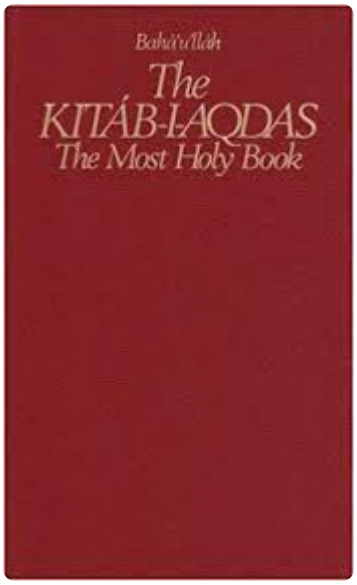
This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1973 THE UHJ WROTE "THE CONSENT REQUIRED BY THE KITAB-I-AQDAS IS THE CONSENT OF THE PARENTS OF THE PARTIES TO THE MARRIAGE. NO ONE ELSE CAN GIVE THIS CONSENT, AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE IS NOT EMPOWERED TO CHANGE THE LAW IN ANY WAY NOR TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT."

April 10. On this date in 1973 the Universal House of Justice wrote "The consent required by the Kitab-i-Aqdas is the consent of the parents of the parties to the marriage. No one else can give this consent, and the Universal House of Justice is not empowered to change the law in any way nor to waive the requirement."

> The consent required by the Kitab-i-Aqdas is the consent of the parents of the parties to the marriage. No one else can give this consent, and the Universal House of Justice is not empowered to change the law in any way nor to waive the requirement.
>
> 10 April 1973 to an individual believer.



Comments

According-Outside535: I hope that all of this doesn't get publicised? Who is responsible for making this public?

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE HE "WOULD SPECIALLY ADVISE YOU TO ENDEAVOUR [TO] COMMIT TO MEMORY CERTAIN PASSAGES FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, AND IN PARTICULAR, SOME OF HIS PRAYERS ... ALSO SERVE TO CONSIDERABLY DEEPEN AND ENRICH YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE AT PRESENT."

April 10. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote he "would specially advise you to endeavour [to] commit to memory certain passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, and in particular, some of His prayers. This training would undoubtedly be of tremendous help to you in your future studies of the Cause, and would also serve to considerably deepen and enrich your own spiritual life at present."

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 2011, THE UHJ WROTE "THE PATTERN OF SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIFE TAKING SHAPE IN CLUSTERS THAT INVOLVES STUDY CIRCLES, CHILDREN'S CLASSES, JUNIOR YOUTH GROUPS, DEVOTIONAL MEETINGS, HOME VISITS, TEACHING EFFORTS, AND REFLECTION MEETINGS, AS WELL AS HOLY DAY OBSERVANCES ...."

April 10. On this date in 2011, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The pattern of spiritual and social life taking shape in clusters that involves study circles, children's classes, junior youth groups, devotional meetings, home visits, teaching efforts, and reflection meetings, as well as Holy Day observances, Nineteen Day Feasts, and other gatherings, provides abundant opportunities for engagement, experience, consultation, and learning that will lead to change in personal and collective understanding and action."

> The pattern of spiritual and social life taking shape in clusters that involves study circles, children's classes, junior youth groups, devotional meetings, home visits, teaching efforts, and reflection meetings, as well as Holy Day observances, Nineteen Day Feasts, and other gatherings, provides abundant opportunities for engagement, experience, consultation, and learning that will lead to change in personal and collective understanding and action. Issues of prejudice of race, class, and color will inevitably arise as the friends reach out to diverse populations, especially in the closely knit context of neighborhoods. There, every activity can take a form most suited to the culture and interests of the population, so that new believers can be quickened and confirmed in a nurturing and familiar environment, until they are able to offer their share to the resolution of the challenges faced by a growing Bahá'í community. For this is not a process that some carry out on behalf of others who are passive recipients--the mere extension of a congregation and invitation to paternalism--but one in which an ever-increasing number of souls recognize and take responsibility for the transformation of humanity set in motion by Bahá'u'lláh. (Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 10 2011)

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1934, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE PRITAM SINGH "THE REALIZATION OF YOUR INABILITY TO SERVE AS SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY HAS DEEPLY GRIEVED HIS HEART. IT IS, INDEED, A MATTER OF DEEP REGRET THAT SUCH AN ABLE, DEVOTED AND EFFICIENT WORKER LIKE YOU SHOULD BE ..."

April 10. On this date in 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote Pritam Singh "the realization of your inability to serve as Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly has deeply grieved his heart. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that such an able, devoted and efficient worker like you should be forced to leave such an important post in the national Sphere of the administration. You should, therefore, make every possible sacrifice in order to continue serving the Cause in this field where you have already attained such a high distinction."

[To Professor Pritam Singh]

April 10, 1934

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letter of March 13th addressed to the Guardian has just been received through the kind care of our dear Mr. Vakil, and the realization of your inability to serve as Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly has deeply grieved his heart. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that such an able, devoted and efficient worker like you should be forced to leave such an important post in the national Sphere of the administration. You should, therefore, make every possible sacrifice in order to continue serving the Cause in this field where you have already attained such a high distinction.

The Guardian, however, wishes by no means to force you to occupy a post which, in addition to the tremendous amount of work it demands, entails a responsibility which, for some reason or another, you may feel unable to assume. He would advise you, however, to submit your case to the National Spiritual Assembly at its next meeting at Delhi, that they may carefully consider the possibility of your resignation from the National Secretariat. They will surely consider the matter sympathetically and dispassionately and will give you ail the advice you need. The National Spiritual

Assembly cannot refuse accepting a resignation when it is well Justified, and when it is done not with the purpose of shirking responsibility but with the intention of giving a chance to others to prove themselves worthy of occupying responsible posts in the administrative field.

Assuring you of the Guardian's prayers on your behalf, and with, his best wishes for the development of your work for the Cause.

Dear and valued co-worker

Your sustained and inspiring labours under such trying and difficult circumstances are indeed highly praiseworthy and meritorious. I will pray from the depths of my heart that you. will find it possible to lend your invaluable assistance to your collaborators in both the teaching and administrative fields of Bahá'í activity. Your competence, your loyalty, your experience and knowledge of the essentials of the Faith eminently qualify you to take an active and leading part in its manifold activities. Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Pritam Singh is believed to be the first member of the Sikh community in India to accept the Bahá'í Faith, and the first to publish a Bahá'í weekly magazine in India. He was born on November 16th, 1881, in Punjab.

Prof. Pritam Singh obtained his B. A. degree in History, Economics and Political Science with distinction. In 1905, he became a teacher in Achison College, Lahore. He received his Master's degree in Economics from the university of Calcutta. He was appointed Professor of Economics and joined the University of Punjab. He was a Linguist and knew Hindi, Urdu, Gurmukhi, Persian and English.

He received the message of Bahá'u'lláh from Mirzá Mahmud soon after his graduation in 1904. He undertook teaching trips alone, and with Ms Martha Root and Dr. G. Y. Chitnis. He resigned from his profession to work for the Cause of God. He had simple habits. For the last few years of his life he pioneered to Amritsar where there were no other Bahá'ís at that time. He was one of the earliest secretaries of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on August 25th, 1959.

Pritam Singh

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, JULIET THOMPSON WROTE IN HER DIARY "TOMORROW HE COMES! WHO COMES? "WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH FROM BOZRAH?" THIS IS A NIGHT OF HOLY EXPECTATION. THE AIR IS CHARGED WITH SANCTITY. I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE "GLORIA IN EXCELSIS". HOW CLOSE HE IS TONIGHT! IS IT HIS ..."

April 10. On this date in 1912, Juliet Thompson wrote in her diary "Tomorrow He comes! Who comes? "Who is this that cometh from Bozrah?" This is a night of holy expectation. The air is charged with sanctity. I can almost hear the *Gloria in Excelsis*. How close He is tonight! Is it His prayers I feel? Why has earth become suddenly divine?"

> 10 April 1912. 11:15 p.m.
>
> Tomorrow He comes! Who comes? "Who is this that cometh from Bozrah?"
>
> This is a night of holy expectation. The air is charged with sanctity. I can almost hear the *Gloria in Excelsis*.
>
> How close He is tonight! Is it His prayers I feel? Why has earth become suddenly divine?

Comments

APRIL 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1993, ROGER WHITE, WRITER, EDITOR AND "POET LAUREATE" OF THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY, DIED IN RICHMOND, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA.

April 10. On this date in 1993, Roger White, writer, editor and "poet laureate" of the Bahá'í community, died in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada.

Roger White was born June 2, 1929 in Toronto, Canada, to Kathleen Rogers and John White, an Irish Roman Catholic family in Canada. He was the oldest of four children.

White's parents were not particularly devout Roman Catholics but White attended church regularly; often taking a younger sister with him. The family moved frequently during his childhood but lived longest in Belleville, Ontario. When he left home he moved to Toronto. In his early twenties, he began to doubt the existence of God. It was also during his twenties that White had self published his first volume of poems, "Summer Windows".

In Toronto he encountered the Bahá'í Faith and converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1951. Shortly after this, White returned to Belleville where he met Helen Owens, who would also convert to the Bahá'í Faith. They were married in 1952 and the next year helped form the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Belleville.

At this time White was employed as Clerk of the local county court. He progressed to be assistant editor of *Hansard*, the record of the proceedings of the Canadian House of Commons. The Whites were very active in the Bahá'í community of Ottawa, but the marriage ended in 1962. After that he took a position with the Supreme Court of British Columbia in Vancouver.

The years 1966 to 1969 he spent in Kenya as secretary and assistant to the Hands of the Cause of God of Africa. Next he spent two years in Palm Desert, California as the personal secretary and research assistant for Hand of the Cause of God William Sears. In 1971 he went to Haifa, Israel to work at the World Centre. He remained there until his retirement in 1991.

Among other duties in Haifa, he was responsible for production of volumes XIV and XIX of The Bahá'í World, a reference series that chronicles the growth and development of the international Bahá'í community.

In Haifa, he was encouraged to develop his own writing. Several volumes of poetry as well as some prose resulted. This work established him as the premier poet of the Bahá'í community. In his correspondence he connected poets around the world with each other.

He wrote of real and archetypal Bahá'ís, bringing them alive to new generations, explored the nature of commitment, relations between genders and the contrast between physical appearance and spiritual realities. Individual poems appeared in a variety of literary journals around the world. Other artists have found inspiration in his work for creating work of their own: paintings, drama, dance and discussion of the Bahá'í religion. This brought joy and satisfaction to his heart

After his retirement he moved to Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, and died there on April 10, 1993.

Works

Summer Windows (1947) poetry

Another Song, Another Season (1979) poetry

The Witness of Pebbles (1981) poetry

A Sudden Music (1983) fiction

One Bird, One Cage, One Flight (1983) poetry

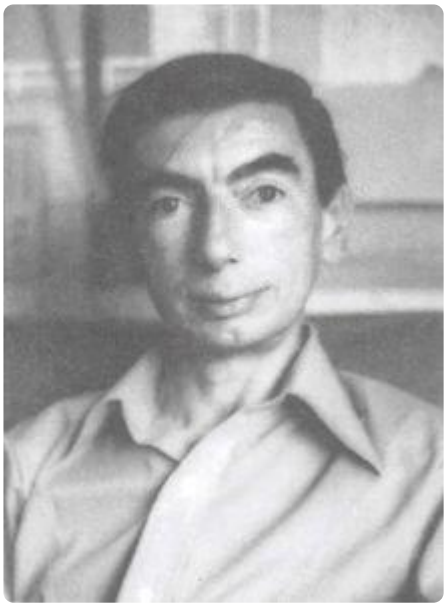
The Shell and the Pearl (1984) history

Occasions of Grace (1992) poetry

Notes Postmarked the Mountain of God (1992) poetry

The Language of There (1992) poetry

Forever in Bloom (1992) prose



Comments

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1916, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WROTE HIS "TABLET TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA," WHICH IS THE 7TH PART OF HIS "TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN".

April 11. On this date in 1916, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote his *Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada*, which is the 7th part of his *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room at the mansion of Bahjí, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of eleven Western States of the United States: New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918.

On December 23, 1918, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent his secretary Ahmad Sohrab to the United States to personally deliver the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as "three of the Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith, which along with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (which Shoghi Effendi described as "the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest") set the foundation of the Administrative Order. Ahmad Sohrab would later be declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi.

> He is God!
>
> O ye real Bahá'ís of America:
>
> PRAISE be to His Highness the Desired One that ye have become confirmed in the promotion of divine teachings in that vast Continent, raised the call of the Kingdom of God in that region and announced the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts and His Highness the Promised One. Thanks be unto the Lord that ye have become assisted and confirmed in this aim. This is purely through the confirmations of the Lord of Hosts and the breaths of the Holy Spirit. The full measure of your success is as yet unrevealed, its significance still unapprehended. Erelong ye will, with your own eyes, witness how brilliantly every one of you, even as a shining star, will radiate in the firmament of your

country the light of divine Guidance, and will bestow upon its people the glory of an everlasting life.

Consider! The station and the confirmation of the apostles in the time of Christ was not known, and no one looked on them with the feeling of importance—nay, rather, they persecuted and ridiculed them. Later on it became evident what crowns studded with the brilliant jewels of guidance were placed on the heads of the apostles, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of John.

The range of your future achievements still remains undisclosed. I fervently hope that in the near future the whole earth may be stirred and shaken by the results of your achievements. The hope, therefore, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá cherishes for you is that the same success which has attended your efforts in America may crown your endeavors in other parts of the world, that through you the fame of the Cause of God may be diffused throughout the East and the West and the advent of the Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts be proclaimed in all the five continents of the globe.

The moment this divine Message is carried forward by the American believers from the shores of America and is propagated through the continents of **Europe, of Asia, of Africa and of Australasia** and as far as the islands of the Pacific, **this community will find itself securely established upon the throne of an everlasting dominion. Then will all the peoples of the world witness that this community is spiritually illumined and divinely guided. Then will the whole earth resound with the praises of its majesty and greatness.** A party speaking their languages, severed, holy, sanctified and filled with the love of God, must turn their faces to and travel through the three great island groups of the Pacific Ocean —**Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia**, and the islands attached to these groups, such as **New Guinea, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Philippine Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Bismarck Archipelago, Ceram, Celebes, Friendly Islands, Samoa Islands, Society Islands, Caroline Islands, Low Archipelago, Marquesas, Hawaiian Islands, Gilbert Islands, Moluccas, Marshall Islands, Timor and the other islands**. With hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues commemorating the mention of God, with eyes turned to the Kingdom of God, they must deliver the glad tidings of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts to all the people. **Know ye of a certainty that whatever gathering ye enter, the waves**

of the Holy Spirit are surging over it, and the heavenly grace of the Blessed Beauty encompasseth that gathering.

Consider ye, that Miss Agnes Alexander, the daughter of the Kingdom, the beloved maidservant of the Blessed Perfection, traveled alone to the Hawaiian Islands, to the **Island of Honolulu**, and now she is gaining spiritual victories in **Japan**! Reflect ye how this daughter was confirmed in the **Hawaiian Islands**. She became the cause of the guidance of a gathering of people.

Likewise Miss Knobloch traveled alone to **Germany**. To what a great extent she became confirmed! Therefore, know ye of a certainty that whosoever arises in this day to diffuse the divine fragrances, the cohorts of the Kingdom of God shall confirm him and the bestowals and the favors of the Blessed Perfection shall encircle him.

O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá" in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.

At this time, in the Hawaiian Islands, through the efforts of Miss Alexander, a number of souls have reached the shore of the sea of faith! Consider ye, what happiness, what joy is this! I declare by the Lord of Hosts that had this respected daughter founded an empire, that empire would not have been so great! For this sovereignty is eternal sovereignty and this glory is everlasting glory.

Likewise, if some teachers go to other islands and other parts, such as the continent of **Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, also to Japan, Asiatic Russia, Korea, French Indochina, Siam, Straits Settlements, India, Ceylon and Afghanistan**, most great results will be forthcoming. How good would it be were there any possibility of a commission composed of men and women, to travel together through **China and Japan**—so that this bond of love may become strengthened, and through this going and coming they may establish the oneness of the world of humanity, summon the people to the Kingdom of God and spread the teachings.

Similarly, if possible, they should travel to the continent of **Africa, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, Madeira Islands, Réunion Islands, St. Helena, Zanzibar, Mauritius**, etc., and in those countries summon the people to the

Kingdom of God and raise the cry of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" They must also upraise the flag of the oneness of the world of humanity in the island of **Madagascar**.

Books and pamphlets must be either translated or composed in the languages of these countries and islands, to be circulated in every part and in all directions.

It is said that in **South Africa**, a diamond mine is discovered. Although this mine is most valuable, yet after all it is stone. Perchance, God willing, the mine of humanity may be discovered and the brilliant pearls of the Kingdom be found.

In brief, this world-consuming war has set such a conflagration to the hearts that no word can describe it. In all the countries of the world the longing for universal peace is taking possession of the consciousness of men. There is not a soul who does not yearn for concord and peace. A most wonderful state of receptivity is being realized. This is through the consummate wisdom of God, so that capacity may be created, the standard of the oneness of the world of humanity be upraised, and the fundamental of universal peace and the divine principles be promoted in the East and the West.

Therefore, O ye believers of God! Show ye an effort and after this war spread ye the synopsis of the divine teachings in **the British Isles, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Rumania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Monaco, San Marino, Balearic Isles, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Malta, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Shetland Islands, Hebrides and Orkney Islands**.

In all these countries, like unto the morning stars shine ye forth from the horizon of guidance. Thus far ye have been untiring in your labors. Let your exertions henceforth increase a thousandfold. Summon the people in these countries, capitals, islands, assemblies and churches to enter the Abhá Kingdom. The scope of your exertions must needs be extended. The wider its range, the more striking will be the evidence of divine assistance.

You have observed that while 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in the utmost bodily weakness and feebleness, while he was indisposed, and had not the power to move—notwithstanding this physical state he traveled through many countries, in **Europe and America**, and in churches, meetings and conventions was occupied with the promotion of the divine principles and summoned the people to the manifestation

of the Kingdom of Abhá. You have also observed how the confirmations of the Blessed Perfection encompassed all. What result is forthcoming from material rest, tranquillity, luxury and attachment to this corporeal world? It is evident that the man who pursues these things will in the end become afflicted with regret and loss.

Consequently, one must close his eyes wholly to these thoughts, long for eternal life, the sublimity of the world of humanity, the celestial developments, the Holy Spirit, the promotion of the Word of God, the guidance of the inhabitants of the globe, the promulgation of universal peace and the proclamation of the oneness of the world of humanity! This is the work! Otherwise like unto other animals and birds one must occupy himself with the requirements of this physical life, the satisfaction of which is the highest aspiration of the animal kingdom, and one must stalk across the earth like unto the quadrupeds.

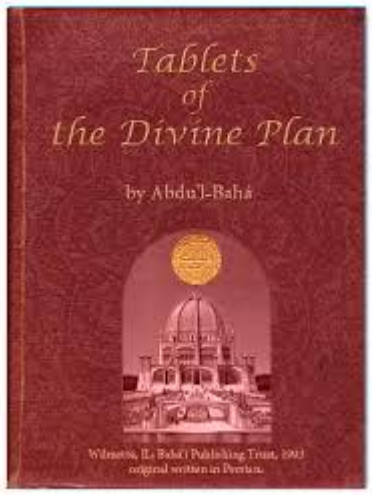
Consider ye! No matter how much man gains wealth, riches and opulence in this world, he will not become as independent as a cow. For these fattened cows roam freely over the vast tableland. All the prairies and meadows are theirs for grazing, and all the springs and rivers are theirs for drinking! No matter how much they graze, the fields will not be exhausted! It is evident that they have earned these material bounties with the utmost facility.

Still more ideal than this life is the life of the bird. A bird, on the summit of a mountain, on the high, waving branches, has built for itself a nest more beautiful than the palaces of the kings! The air is in the utmost purity, the water cool and clear as crystal, the panorama charming and enchanting. In such glorious surroundings, he expends his numbered days. All the harvests of the plain are his possessions, having earned all this wealth without the least labor. Hence, no matter how much man may advance in this world, he shall not attain to the station of this bird! Thus it becomes evident that in the matters of this world, however much man may strive and work to the point of death, he will be unable to earn the abundance, the freedom and the independent life of a small bird. This proves and establishes the fact that man is not created for the life of this ephemeral world—nay, rather, is he created for the acquirement of infinite perfections, for the attainment to the sublimity of the world of humanity, to be drawn nigh unto the divine threshold, and to sit on the throne of everlasting sovereignty!

Upon you be Bahá'u'l-Abhá!

Whoever sets out on a teaching journey to any place, let him recite this prayer day and night during his travels in foreign lands:

> O GOD, my God! Thou seest me enraptured and attracted toward Thy glorious kingdom, enkindled with the fire of Thy love amongst mankind, a herald of Thy kingdom in these vast and spacious lands, severed from aught else save Thee, relying on Thee, abandoning rest and comfort, remote from my native home, a wanderer in these regions, a stranger fallen upon the ground, humble before Thine exalted threshold, submissive toward the heaven of Thine omnipotent glory, supplicating Thee in the dead of night and at the break of dawn, entreating and invoking Thee at morn and at eventide to graciously aid me to serve Thy Cause, to spread abroad Thy teachings and to exalt Thy Word throughout the East and the West.
>
> O Lord! Strengthen my back, enable me to serve Thee with the utmost endeavor, and leave me not to myself, lonely and helpless in these regions.
>
> O Lord! Grant me communion with Thee in my loneliness, and be my companion in these foreign lands.
>
> Verily, Thou art the Confirmer of whomsoever Thou willest in that which Thou desirest, and, verily, Thou art the All-Powerful, the Omnipotent.



Comments

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1950, THE NSA OF IRAN "...PAMPHLET BE PREPARED OVER FÁDIL'S SIGNATURE, IN WHICH HE REPUDIATED 37 POINTS OF HIS TÁRÍKH ZUHÚRU'L-HAQQ, VOL. 3, THAT DIFFERED IN DETAIL FROM NABÍL...THIS CONCERN WITH HIS HISTORY RESULTED IN NONE OF THE OTHER VOLUMES BEING PUBLISHED..."

April 11. On this date in 1950, the NSA of Iran "requested that a pamphlet be prepared over Fádil's signature, in which he repudiated 37 points of his Táríkh Zuhúru'l-Haqq, vol. 3, that differed in detail from Nabíl. It appears that this concern with his history resulted in none of the other volumes being published to date, with the sole exception of volume 8 which covered the life of prominent Bahá'ís during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's minister and did not overlap with The Dawn-Breakers or God Passes By."

From page 10 of Ahang Rabbani's *The Bábís of Nayríz, History and Documents, Volume 2, Witnesses to Bábí and Bahá'í History*...

> On 11 April 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran requested that a pamphlet be prepared over Fádil's signature, in which he repudiated 37 points of his Táríkh Zuhúru'l-Haqq, vol. 3, that differed in detail from Nabíl. It appears that this concern with his history resulted in none of the other volumes being published to date, with the sole exception of volume 8 which covered the life of prominent Bahá'ís during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's minister and did not overlap with The Dawn-Breakers or God Passes By.

In fact, Hand of the Cause of God and Iran National Spiritual Assembly Member 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, was instrumental in censoring (devout Bahá'í scholar) Jinab-i Fadil's academic works.

Comments

Anonymous: Where can I find the Zohur alhagh online? The full volumes.Husseyn Amanat references him on his history books about Bab.

Anonymous: Where do I find the PDF or Audiobook of full volumes?Ocean has it?

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1949, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE HERMANN GROSSMANN "ONCE A BAHÁ'Í HAS THE PROFOUND CONVICTION OF THE AUTHORITY FROM GOD, NESTED IN THE PROPHET, PASSED ON TO THE MASTER, AND BY HIM, TO THE GUARDIANS, AND WHICH FLOWS OUT THROUGH THE ASSEMBLIES AND CREATES ORDER BASED ON OBEDIENCE"

April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote Hermann Grossmann "But once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, nested in the Prophet, passed on to the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the assemblies and creates order based on obedience--once a Bahá'í has this, nothing can shake him."

> 11 April 1949 [to Dr. Hermann Grossmann]
>
> He fully approves of Dr. Townshend being invited to speak in Germany, as you propose, providing, of course, that the necessary funds for his trip can be arranged for.
>
> The contact with intellectuals is very important, but so far, like the early days of Christianity, in the West, few of them have cared to identify themselves with this young and struggling Faith of ours! Let us hope, however, that the time is approaching when they will.
>
> **The Guardian has been considerably disturbed by the inharmony that has arisen in Germany. He feels that what the German Bahá'ís need--and must have--more than anything else in the world is a far deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.** This is the rock foundation without which no sound super-structure can be built. Neither the administration, nor the general teaching work of the Cause in Germany, will progress, or be able to accomplish anything, unless the believers are truly firm, deep, spiritually convinced Bahá'ís. An intellectual grasp of the teachings is purely superficial; with the first real test such believers are shaken from the bough! **But once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, nested in the Prophet, passed on to the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the assemblies and creates order based on obedience--once a Bahá'í**

has this, nothing can shake him. He, therefore, urges you, and the other members of the N.G.R., to devote as much time as you possibly can, to educating the believers in the Covenant.

Comments

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1949, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE COMPLETION OF THE MOTHER TEMPLE OF THE WEST, THE SACREDNESS OF WHICH NEITHER THE FIRST MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, NOR ANY FUTURE HOUSE OF WORSHIP TO BE ERECTED BY THE FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, IN ANY COUNTRY, AT ANY FUTURE DATE..

April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The completion of the Mother Temple of the West, the sacredness of which neither the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, nor any future House of Worship to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, in any country, at any future date, can rival..."

> One Remaining Objective Hangs in the Balance
>
> The American Bahá'í Community, undefeated as yet in the performance of any task undertaken collectively by its members, in the course of its eventful history, is now entering a period of grave emergency, that will try the mettle of every single one of its members. Severe as the challenge will be, however prolonged the test, no matter how distracting the condition of the world about them, the issues which claim every ounce of their energy and call for their sustained, wholehearted, concentrated attention are so weighty that none can evaluate at present the influence they will exert on the course of the community's future destiny.
>
> There can be no doubt that the Second Seven Year Plan, the vital link binding the initial and concluding stages of the first epoch in the progressive evolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's long-term continually unfolding Plan, has reached its crucial phase--a phase on which hinge the fortunes not only of the Plan itself but of the community as a whole. The fourth objective of the Plan, the transatlantic project, on which its members have embarked, has, four years ahead of schedule, been, to all intents and purposes, victoriously achieved. The third objective has been partly attained, while its complete fulfillment, as a direct consequence of the marvelous success that has attended the valiant labors of the American pioneers and the newly enrolled native believers in Latin America, appears to be now fully assured. The attainment of the first objective has, as a result of the remarkable impetus given,

during the opening years of the Plan, to the multiplication of spiritual assemblies and the proclamation of the Faith in North America, been greatly facilitated, and will, with steady effort, involving not too great an expenditure of energy, be insured in the course of the concluding phase of the Plan. **The completion of the Mother Temple of the West, the sacredness of which neither the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, nor any future House of Worship to be erected by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, in any country, at any future date, can rival, in time for the celebration of its Jubilee, is the one remaining objective that now hangs precariously in the balance.** Owing to a combination of circumstances wholly beyond the control of its builders, this task has assumed a critical importance, and is of such vital urgency, that no prosecutor of the Plan, eager to witness its consummation, can afford to ignore for a moment.

The sacrifice demanded is such as to have no parallel whatsoever in the history of that community. The manifold issues inextricably interwoven with the campaign audaciously launched for the achievement of this high objective are of such a weighty character as to overshadow every enterprise embarked upon through the organized efforts of its members, in either the concluding years of the Heroic Age of the Faith or the first epoch of the Age which succeeded it. The two years during which this emergency will be most keenly felt coincide on the one hand with a period of increasing distraction occasioned by the uncertainties, the perils and fears of a steadily worsening international situation, and on the other with the centenary of one of the most turbulent, afflictive and glorious stages of Bahá'í history--a stage immortalized by an effusion of blood, a self-abnegation, a heroism unsurpassed not only in the annals of the Faith but in the world's spiritual history. How meritorious, indeed, are the self-denying acts which this supremely challenging hour now calls forth, amidst the perplexities and confusion which present-day society is now experiencing! And yet, how trifling in comparison with the self-immolation of the most distinguished, the most precious heroes and saints of the Primitive Age of our glorious Faith! An outpouring of treasure, no less copious than the blood shed so lavishly in the Apostolic Age of the Faith by those who in the heart of the Asiatic continent proclaimed its birth to the world, can befit their spiritual descendants, who, in the present Formative Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation, have championed the Cause, and assumed so preponderating a share in the erection of its Administrative Order, and are now engaged in the final stage

of the building of the House that incarnates the soul of that Faith in the American continent. **No sacrifice can be deemed too great to insure the completion of such an edifice--the most holy House of Worship ever to be associated with the Faith of the Most Great Name** --an edifice whose inception has shed such a luster on the closing years of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation, which has assumed a concrete shape in the present Formative stage in the evolution of our beloved Faith, whose dependencies must spring into existence in the course of successive epochs of this same Age, and whose fairest fruits will be garnered in the Age that is to come, the last, the Golden Age of the initial and brightest Dispensation of the five-thousand-century Bahá'í Cycle.

"A most wonderful and thrilling motion will appear in the world of existence," are `Abdu'l-Bahá's own words, predicting the release of spiritual forces that must accompany the completion of this most hallowed House of Worship. "From that point of light," He, further glorifying that edifice, has written, "the spirit of teaching ... will permeate to all parts of the world." And again: "Out of this Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, without doubt, thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkars will be born." "It marks the inception of the Kingdom of God on earth."

Again I repeat--and I cannot overrate the vital, the unique importance of the campaign now launched to insure the completion of such an edifice--the immediate destiny of the American Bahá'í Community is intimately and inescapably bound up with the outcome of this newly launched, this severely trying, soul-purging, spiritually uplifting campaign. The God-given mission, constituting the birthright, and proclaiming the primacy of a community whose members the Founder of that community, the Center of the Covenant Himself, has addressed as the "Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh," can only be fulfilled if they befittingly obey the specific Mandate issued by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets of the Divine Plan. The execution of this Mandate is, in its turn, dependent upon the triumphant conclusion of the Second Seven Year Plan, the second stage in the series of specific plans formulated to insure the successful termination of the opening phase in the execution of that Mandate. Indeed, the successive plans, inaugurated since the birth of the second Bahá'í century, by the British, the Indian, the Persian, the Australia-New Zealand, the Iraqi, the German and the Egyptian National Assemblies, with the exception of the plan undertaken by the Canadian National Assembly, which forms an integral part of the Plan associated with the Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, are

but supplements to the vast enterprise whose features have been delineated in those Tablets and are to be regarded, by their very nature, as regional in scope, in contrast with the world-embracing character of the mission entrusted to the community of the champion builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and the torch-bearers of the civilization which that Order must eventually establish. As to the Second Seven Year Plan itself, its eventual success must depend on the attainment of its second and most vital objective. This objective, in its turn, cannot be achieved unless the two-year campaign, now launched by the elected representatives of this community, is successfully carried out. Nor can this campaign yield its richest fruit unless and until the community, in its entirety, participates in this nation-wide sacrificial effort. Nor can this collective effort be blessed, to the fullest extent possible, unless the contributions made by its members involve acts of self-abnegation, not only on the part of those of modest means, but also by those endowed with substantial resources. Nor, indeed, can these self-denying acts, by both the rich and the poor, be productive of the fullest possible benefit unless this sacrificial effort is neither momentary nor haphazard, but rather systematic and continuous throughout the period of the present emergency.

Then and only then will this holy edifice, symbol and harbinger of a world civilization as yet unborn, and the embodiment of the sacrifice of a multitude of the upholders of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, release the full measure of the regenerative power with which it has been endowed, shed in all its plenitude the glory of the Most Holy Spirit dwelling within it, and vindicate, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the truth of every single promise recorded by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá pertaining to its destiny.

No more befitting consummation for this magnificent enterprise can be envisaged than that this noble edifice, whose cornerstone has been laid by `Abdu'l-Bahá's own hands, the preliminary measure for whose construction synchronized with the formal interment of the Báb's remains on Mt. Carmel, within whose walls the first Centenary of the birth of His ministry has been celebrated, whose interior ornamentation has coincided with the construction of the arcade of His Sepulcher, should be vouchsafed the honor of having the Jubilee of its inception coincide with, and celebrated on the occasion of, the Centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic Mission in the Siyáh-Chál of Tihrán.

[April 11, 1949]

Comments

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, AN NSA ASKED THE UHJ "REGARDING CONTACT THROUGH THE INTERNET BETWEEN THE FRIENDS AND COVENANT-BREAKER GROUPS" WHO NOTED "ANY PLANS THAT YOU HAVE TO ALERT THE FRIENDS TO COVENANT-BREAKER ACTIVITY ON THE INTERNET SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE UNDERTAKEN WITH WISDOM ..."

April 11. On this date in 1997, an NSA asked the Universal House of Justice "regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups" who noted "Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom and discretion so as to avoid giving Covenant-breakers more attention or prominence than they would otherwise receive."

> Your email of 11 April 1997 regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups has been received by the Universal House of Justice. It is not possible to provide you with a list of Internet addresses of Covenant-breaker groups as you have requested, as no such listing is being maintained at the Bahá'í World Centre at this time.
>
> Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom and discretion so as to avoid giving Covenant-breakers more attention or prominence than they would otherwise receive.
>
> (From a letter dated 4 May 1997 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

Comments

APRIL 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1949, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE HE "HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY DISTURBED BY THE INHARMONY THAT HAS ARISEN IN GERMANY...WHAT THE GERMAN BAHÁ'ÍS NEED--AND MUST HAVE--MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD IS A FAR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE COVENANTS OF BOTH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE MASTER.

April 11. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote Hermann Grossmann he "has been considerably disturbed by the inharmony that has arisen in Germany. He feels that what the German Bahá'ís need--and must have--more than anything else in the world is a far deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Master."

> 11 April 1949 [to Dr. Hermann Grossmann]
>
> He fully approves of Dr. Townshend being invited to speak in Germany, as you propose, providing, of course, that the necessary funds for his trip can be arranged for.
>
> The contact with intellectuals is very important, but so far, like the early days of Christianity, in the West, few of them have cared to identify themselves with this young and struggling Faith of ours! Let us hope, however, that the time is approaching when they will.
>
> **The Guardian has been considerably disturbed by the inharmony that has arisen in Germany. He feels that what the German Bahá'ís need--and must have--more than anything else in the world is a far deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.** This is the rock foundation without which no sound super-structure can be built. Neither the administration, nor the general teaching work of the Cause in Germany, will progress, or be able to accomplish anything, unless the believers are truly firm, deep, spiritually convinced Bahá'ís. An intellectual grasp of the teachings is purely superficial; with the first real test such believers are shaken from the bough! **But once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, nested in the Prophet, passed on to the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the assemblies and creates order based on obedience--once a Bahá'í**

has this, nothing can shake him. He, therefore, urges you, and the other members of the N.G.R., to devote as much time as you possibly can, to educating the believers in the Covenant.

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1873, HIPPOLYTE DREYFUS-BARNEY, LATER THE FIRST FRENCH BAHÁ'Í, DISCIPLE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SCHOLAR AND TRANSLATOR, WAS BORN. THE SON OF A PROMINENT FRENCH JEWISH FAMILY, HE WAS CONVERTED TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AROUND 1900 BY MAY BOLLES (LATER MAXWELL), WHO WAS RESIDENT IN FRANC

April 12. On this date in 1873, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, later the first French Bahá'í, Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í scholar and translator, was born. The son of a prominent French Jewish family), he was converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1900 by May Ellis Bolles (later Maxwell), the mother of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, who was resident in France.

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, DURING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ'S NORTH AMERICAN TOUR, A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE INTRODUCED HIM AS "HEAD OF ONE OF THE NEWEST AND MOST THRIVING RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD, NUMBERING 20,000,000 SOULS AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS, OF WHOM SEVERAL HUNDRED SOULS ARE IN NEW YORK."

April 12. On this date in 1912, during ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's North American tour, a newspaper article in The Evening World of New York introduced him as "head of one of the newest and most thriving religions in the world, numbering 20,000,000 souls among his followers, of whom several hundred souls are in New York."

Here We Must Get Back to the Fundamental Truth, Return to the Starting Point--If You Interrupt Him You Get Squelched.

By Nixola Greeley-Smith.

NO QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY THE PROPHET.

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1927, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "... WAY OF HOLINESS HE CHOSE TO TREAD TO THE VERY END OF HIS LIFE. NOTHING SHORT OF THE STRICTEST ADHERENCE TO HIS GLORIOUS EXAMPLE CAN SAFELY STEER OUR COURSE AMID THE PITFALLS OF THIS PERILOUS AGE, AND LEAD US ON TO FULFILL OUR HIGH DESTINY."

April 12. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. and Canada "Such is the path of servitude, such is the way of holiness He chose to tread to the very end of His life. Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious example can safely steer our course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and lead us on to fulfill our high destiny."

Letter 40

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís

of the United States and Canada: Dearly-beloved friends:

Your recent communications, dated February 17 and March 2, 17 and 21, have been received, and their perusal has served to heighten my admiration for the unflinching determination which characterizes the concerted efforts which you are exerting for the spread and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith.

Inter-racial Amity

I have also received and read with the keenest interest and appreciation a copy of that splendid document formulated by the National Committee on inter-racial amity and addressed to all the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the United States and Canada. This moving appeal, so admirable in its conception, so sound and sober in its language, has struck a responsive chord in my heart. Sent forth at a highly opportune moment in the evolution of our sacred Faith, it has served as a potent reminder of these challenging issues which still confront in a peculiar manner the American believers.

As this problem, in the inevitable course of events, grows in acuteness and complexity, and as the number of the faithful from both races multiplies, it will become increasingly evident that the future growth and prestige of the Cause are

bound to be influenced to a very considerable degree by the manner in which the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith carry out, first among themselves and in their relations with their fellow-men, those high standards of inter-racial amity so widely proclaimed and so fearlessly exemplified to the American people by our Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I direct my appeal with all the earnestness and urgency that this pressing problem calls for to every conscientious upholder of the universal principles of Bahá'u'lláh to face this extremely delicate situation with the boldness, the decisiveness and wisdom it demands. I cannot believe that those whose hearts have been touched by the regenerating influence of God's creative Faith in His day will find it difficult to cleanse their souls from every lingering trace of racial animosity so subversive of the Faith they profess. How can hearts that throb with the love of God fail to respond to all the implications of this supreme injunction of Bahá'u'lláh, the unreserved acceptance of which, under the circumstances now prevailing in America, constitutes the hall-mark of a true Bahá'í character?

Let every believer, desirous to witness the swift and healthy progress of the Cause of God, realize the twofold nature of his task. Let him first turn his eyes inwardly and search his own heart and satisfy himself that in his relations with his fellow-believers, irrespective of color and class, he is proving himself increasingly loyal to the spirit of his beloved Faith. Assured and content that he is exerting his utmost in a conscious effort to approach nearer every day the lofty station to which his gracious Master summons him, let him turn to his second task, and, with befitting confidence and vigor, assail the devastating power of those forces which in his own heart he has already succeeded in subduing. Fully alive to the unfailing efficacy of the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and armed with the essential weapons of wise restraint and inflexible resolve, let him wage a constant fight against the inherited tendencies, the corruptive instincts, the fluctuating fashions, the false pretences of the society in which he lives and moves.

In their relations amongst themselves as fellow-believers, let them not be content with the mere exchange of cold and empty formalities often connected with the organizing of banquets, receptions, consultative assemblies, and lecture-halls. Let them rather, as equal co-sharers in the spiritual benefits conferred upon them by Bahá'u'lláh, arise and, with the aid and counsel of their local and national representatives, supplement these official functions with those opportunities which

only a close and intimate social intercourse can adequately provide. In their homes, in their hours of relaxation and leisure, in the daily contact of business transactions, in the association of their children, whether in their study-classes, their playgrounds, and club-rooms, in short under all possible circumstances, however insignificant they appear, the community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh should satisfy themselves that in the eyes of the world at large and in the sight of their vigilant Master they are the living witnesses of those truths which He fondly cherished and tirelessly championed to the very end of His days. If we relax in our purpose, if we falter in our faith, if we neglect the varied opportunities given us from time to time by an all-wise and gracious Master, we are not merely failing in what is our most vital and conspicuous obligation, but are thereby insensibly retarding the flow of those quickening energies which can alone insure the vigorous and speedy development of God's struggling Faith.

I would particularly address my appeal to you, as the Trustees of God's sacred Faith, to reaffirm by word and deed the spirit and character of the insistent admonitions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so solemnly and so explicitly uttered in the course of His journeys through your land--a trust which it is your privilege and function to preserve and fortify.

May the varied opportunities presented by the forthcoming assembly of the friends at Green Acre this summer--a place so admirably suited to the realization of such a noble ideal--be fully utilized to further this noble end. May it, on one hand, serve to banish once and for all every misgiving and mistrust as to the attitude that should characterize the conduct of the members of the Bahá'í family, and, on the other, serve to familiarize the invited public with that aspect of our Faith which, owing to the pressure of circumstances, a few have inclined to belittle or ignore.

Green Acre--a Testing Ground

It is my earnest hope and prayer that the forthcoming gathering at Green Acre, the program for which has been so carefully and judiciously prepared, may serve as a testing ground for the application of those ideals and standards that are the distinguishing features of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. May the assembled believers-- now but a tiny nucleus of the Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future--so exemplify that spirit of universal love and fellowship as to evoke in the minds of

their associates the vision of that future City of God which the almighty arm of Bahá'u'lláh can alone establish.

Not by merely imitating the excesses and laxity of the extravagant age they live in; not by the idle neglect of the sacred responsibilities it is their privilege to shoulder; not by the silent compromise of the principles dearly cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; not by their fear or unpopularity or their dread of censure can they hope to rouse society from its spiritual lethargy, and serve as a model to a civilization the foundations of which the corrosion of prejudice has well-nigh undermined. By the sublimity of their principles, the warmth of their love, the spotless purity of their character, and the depth of their devoutness and piety, let them demonstrate to their fellow-countrymen the ennobling reality of a power that shall weld a disrupted world.

We can prove ourselves worthy of our Cause only if in our individual conduct and corporate life we sedulously imitate the example of our beloved Master, Whom the terrors of tyranny, the storms of incessant abuse, the oppressiveness of humiliation, never caused to deviate a hair's breadth from the revealed Law of Bahá'u'lláh.

Such is the path of servitude, such is the way of holiness He chose to tread to the very end of His life. Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious example can safely steer our course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and lead us on to fulfill our high destiny.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

April 12, 1927.

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID "WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER HERE BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD--YOU FROM AMERICA, I FROM PERSIA--ALL IN LOVE AND UNITY OF SPIRIT. WAS THIS POSSIBLE IN FORMER CENTURIES? IF IT IS POSSIBLE NOW AFTER FIFTY YEARS OF SACRIFICE AND TEACHING, WHAT SHALL ..."

April 12. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "We have been brought together here by the power of His Word--you from America, I from Persia--all in love and unity of spirit. Was this possible in former centuries? If it is possible now after fifty years of sacrifice and teaching, what shall we expect in the wonderful centuries coming?"

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID "DO YOU APPRECIATE THE DAY IN WHICH YOU LIVE? THIS IS THE CENTURY OF THE BLESSED PERFECTION! THIS IS THE CYCLE OF THE LIGHT OF HIS BEAUTY! THIS IS THE CONSUMMATE DAY OF ALL THE PROPHETS! THESE ARE THE DAYS OF SEED SOWING. THESE ARE THE DAYS OF ..."

April 12. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Do you appreciate the Day in which you live? This is the century of the Blessed Perfection! This is the cycle of the light of His beauty! This is the consummate day of all the Prophets! These are the days of seed sowing. These are the days of tree planting."

Comments

APRIL 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1933, SHOGHI EFFENDI AND RUHI AFNAN ADDRESSED A LETTER TO LOUISE DRAKE WRIGHT, CONCERNING HER PIONEERING TO HOLLAND AND NOTING THAT J.E. ESSLEMONT'S "BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE NEW ERA" "IS BEING TRANSLATED INTO FIFTEEN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES!"

April 12. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi and Ruhi Afnan addressed a letter to Louise Drake Wright, concerning her pioneering to Holland and noting that J.E. Esslemont's Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era "is being translated into fifteen additional languages!" Ruhi Afnan was Shoghi Effendi's close friend, first cousin, and secretary with whom he took many travels, but Shoghi Effendi would later declare him a Covenant-breaker.

letter to Louise Drake Wright

> Dear Miss Wright:
>
> Shoghi Effendi was delighted to receive you letter of March 31st, 1933 and obtain the news of your safe arrival to Holland. He sincerely hopes that you will pick up the threads of the work you did there last year and gradually confirm in the teachings those you had interested.
>
> You may be interested to know that Mr. and Mrs. Max Greeven will soon be in Rotterdam, if they are not there already, to attend to the publication of Dr. Esslemont's book into Dutch. As they are expecting to get in touch with Captain Liebau who is now in Holland, you can therefore reach them through him.

There is also a young man by the name of Grosfeld, who is Dutch and has been living in the Dutch East Indies, who is coming back to reside in Holland. He is travelling through the United States to meet the friends there.

> With all you people centered in Holland some really lasting and wonderful work should be accomplished. But, naturally, much will depend upon you, who will act as the teacher and will stay in the country for some time. They can be very helpful to create for you new contacts, and introduce you to circles where they are known, and in which you could not otherwise enter, or obtain access to. The introductions that you possess are also very valuable and helpful.

> Shoghi Effendi wishes me to assure you of his prayers and best wishes for a successful campaign. He trusts that God will guide you and enable you to create a strong and permanent center in that country. He will be eagerly awaiting the news of your activities and the progress of your work.
>
> With best wishes, yours ever sincerely, Rúhí Afnán
>
> Dear and precious co-worker:
>
> Your two letters dated April 6th and 7th have just arrived and I am delighted to learn of the splendid start you have made. I wish you could induce Mr. [...] to undertake and finish as soon as he can the translation of the Iqán, which has already been published into four languages, the latest being the Chinese version. The book constitutes an essential preliminary to an intensive and intelligent campaign of teaching in Holland. I wish he could complete the translation before the end of the present year! If he cannot undertake it in person, I trust his collaborators may enable him to complete it. The "New Era" is being translated into fifteen additional languages! May the Beloved bless richly your historic work. Rest assured, I will continue to pray for you. Your true brother, Shoghi

The cablegrams concerning the declaration of Ruhi Afnan a Covenant-breaker include one from December 13, 1951 titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" where Shoghi Effendi says, "Evidences multiplying attesting Ruhi's increasing rebelliousness, efforts exerted my eldest sister pave way fourth alliance members family Siyyid 'Alí involving marriage his granddaughter with Ruha's son and personal contact recently established my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz with Majdi'd-Din, redoubtable enemy Faith, former henchman Muhammad-'Ali, Archbreaker Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. Another cablegram sent May 17, 1953, titled "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan", stated "Treacherous Ruhi Afnan, not content with previous disobedience, correspondence with Ahmad Sohrab, contact with old Covenant-breakers, sale, in conjunction with other members of family, of sacred property purchased by Founder of Faith, and allowing his sister to marry son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemy, is now openly lecturing on Bahá'í movement, claiming to be its exponent and is misrepresenting the teachings and deliberately causing confusion in minds of authorities and the local population. Inform National Assemblies."

John Esslemont was a leading Bahá'í who appears repeatedly at key points in Bahá'í history. For example, at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the

London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

> Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the

earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

Comments

APRIL 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1983, ARNOLD ZONNEVELD DIED IN COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA. BORN IN 1933 IN THE NETHERLANDS, HE BECAME A BAHÁ'Í IN 1961, AND SPENT 22 OF HIS NEXT 23 YEARS PIONEERING. HE WAS SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE AND SIX CHILDREN.

April 13. On this date in 1983, Arnold Zonneveld died in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Born in 1933 in the Netherlands, he became a Bahá'í in 1961, and spent 22 of his next 23 years pioneering. He was survived by his wife and six children.

From "In Memoriam", published in *Bahá'í World, Vol. 18*...

> ARNOLD ZONNEVELD
>
> 1933-1983
>
> > GRIEVED LEARN PASSING ARNOLD ZONNEVELD HIS DEDICATED OUTSTANDING SERVICES PIONEER FIELD MERIT GOOD PLEASURE BLESSED BEAUTY. KINDLY CONVEY MEMBERS HIS FAMILY CONDOLENCES LOVING SYMPATHY AND ASSURANCE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
> >
> > Universal House of Justice, 5 April 1983
>
> Arnold Zonneveld was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, on 30 March 1933 and died in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 13 April 1983. This exceptional Bahá'í of Dutch background was known to a very few of his fellow Dutch believers, for barely one year of his twenty-three years of life as a Bahá'í was spent in his home country. Arnold was the example of a born pioneer: he gave up everything in order to settle in the most inhospitable places where he lived in primitive circumstances and devoted himself to the spiritual and physical well-being of his fellow man. Whether he had to endure bitter cold or terrible heat, whether alone and unmarried or responsible for a large family, Arnold understood the art of being satisfied under all conditions. We can rightly call him a true servant of God.

He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Arnold van Ogtrop, and in 1961, while attending the International Summer School for Youth in Delft, the Netherlands, he met Paul Adams, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Spitsbergen, and heard his account of life in that barren arctic region. Arnold decided to join Paul in Spitsbergen. He served there for three years, working as a hunter and later in coal-mines. The rigorous climate and hard working conditions affected his health and he had to leave. He returned to Germany and in 1965 married Gisela von Brunn. The following year, inspired by the talks given by Anna Grossmann at the German Summer School, they resolved to pioneer to Latin America. Bolivia seemed to offer the opportunity they sought to actively spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh among a receptive population. On 21 November 1966 they arrived in South America with their one-year-old son, Hilmar, and soon settled in Cochabamba.

Arnold's capacity to take up whatever work was available proved especially useful. He took on many projects — woodworking, business, agriculture, cattle breeding — and earned a wide reputation as a trustworthy and competent workman. It was not always a simple matter to earn a livelihood for his growing family and he suffered many setbacks. They received great moral and practical support from Gisela's mother, Ursula von Brunn, who joined them in Cochabamba in September 1967.

The Zonnevelds settled in the centre of the tropical jungle and savannah area, in the Department of Beni, where they located on a piece of land on the Rio Blanco and gave their home the name El Alba (Dawn). El Alba served well as a pioneer post because seven of the eight provinces of Beni can be reached by rivers, there being virtually no roads or other amenities. Equally important, there is a city in the area, Costa Marques, Brazil. There were no Western comforts which meant that basic daily needs occupied a great deal of time, a circumstance which they deeply regretted. The Zonneveld family, which eventually numbered six children, adopted the local way of life as their own. Lumber was difficult to obtain. Although he had never thought he had a talent for technical things, Arnold developed two different guide-systems for chainsaws and began to fell trees and to saw planks. The sale of quality planks became the primary source of income for the family.

Their way of life aroused admiration and astonishment on the part of the native people and visitors alike. But the Zonnevelds found no solution to the problem of how to free themselves to devote more time to the Bahá'í Faith and to projects that

would improve the living conditions of the local people. It was their dearest wish to establish first a primary school and later a trade school for the region, but their appeals for others to join them in the area and lend assistance went unanswered.

Early in 1983 Arnold fell ill. After a long bout of malaria it was discovered that he had a brain tumour which had already developed beyond the stage where it could be treated. On 13 April 1983 he passed away peacefully in the presence of his wife and their two oldest children, supported by the prayers of the Bahá'ís of Cochabamba and other centres. This servant of the Cause of God devoted himself to the service of a special race of people of whom he was very fond. Often the task seemed beyond his strength. His family prays that the effort expended in Cochabamba be not lost and that the promise of success be fully realized. May we remember in our prayers the one who has passed away and also those who live after him.

Extracted from a memoir by MARIJE FIENIEG-JONKERS (Translated from the Dutch by NANCY FOLKEMA)

Comments

APRIL 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1944, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "REGARDING YOUR QUESTION AS TO THE CHANGING OF PRONOUNS IN BAHÁ'Í PRAYERS: THE GUARDIAN DOES NOT APPROVE OF SUCH CHANGES, EITHER IN THE SPECIFIC PRAYERS OR IN ANY OTHERS. THEY SHOULD BE READ AS PRINTED WITHOUT CHANGING A SINGLE WORD."

April 13. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding your question as to the changing of pronouns in Bahá'í prayers: The Guardian does not approve of such changes, either in the specific prayers or in any others. They should be read as printed without changing a single word."

> 1495. Prayers Should Be Read as Printed
>
> "Regarding your question as to the changing of pronouns in Bahá'í prayers: The Guardian does not approve of such changes, either in the specific prayers or in any others. They should be read as printed without changing a single word."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, April 13, 1944: Bahá'í News, No. 171, November 1944, p. 3)

Comments

APRIL 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1919, PHOEBE HEARST DIED. SHE WAS AN EARLY BAHÁ'Í, A WEALTHY PHILANTHROPIST, THE WIFE OF SENATOR GEORGE HEARST, AND THE MOTHER OF PUBLISHER WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST. SHE LATER BECAME ESTRANGED FROM THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH DUE TO BEING EXTORTED FOR MONEY BY OTHER BAHÁ'ÍS.

April 13. On this date in 1919, Phoebe Hearst passed away. She was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

Phoebe Hearst was raised a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian faith in the 1840s. In 1898 she converted to the Bahá'í Faith, and undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Ibrahim George Kheiralla, Lua Getsinger and May Boles. It was during this trip, in Akka, that Kheiralla witnessed firsthand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers, leading him, upon his return to America in 1899, to form the "Society of Behaists" which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and to author a book, *Beha'u'llah*, wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh

Phoebe Hearst helped play a key role in the spread of the Bahá'í Faithin the United States. In October 1912 she invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who would arrive in the United States the following month,to stay at her home for a long weekend, even though at that time she had become estranged from the Bahá'í Faith. During his stay 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentioned that anyone who tried to extort money or goods from others should not be considered a true Bahá'í. Mrs. Hearst had been a victim of such an incident, which had caused her estrangement from the religion.

Comments

APRIL 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1983, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF BRAZIL "THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, IT IS INDEED A DIVINE INSTITUTION, CREATED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN HIS KITAB-I-AQDAS AS THE LOCAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE."

April 13. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Brazil "the Local Spiritual Assembly, it is indeed a divine institution, created by Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitab-i-Aqdas as the Local House of Justice."

1458. Bahá'ís Must Be Loyal to Their Spiritual Assembly and at the Same Time to Civil Government, Whether Tribal Council, a Cacique or a Municipal Authority

"As to your query about the Local Spiritual Assembly, it is indeed a divine institution, created by Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitab-i-Aqdas as the Local House of Justice. Abdu'l-Bahá has clearly set out its provenance, authority and duties and has explained the differences between it and other administrative institutions, whether of the past or the present. We refer you to the book 'Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá', sections 37, 38, and 40.

"It is clear that while Local Spiritual Assemblies must supervise all Bahá'í matters in their areas, including arrangement for the Nineteen Day Feast, the observance of the Holy Days, the election of the members of the Assembly, promoting the teaching work, caring for the spiritual welfare and Bahá'í education of the friends and children, etcetera, they and the friends themselves must at the same time be good citizens and loyal to the civil government, whether it be a Tribal Council, a Cacique or a municipal authority.

"In another national community, where the number of believers had increased to the point where the population of some villages had become 100% or almost 100% Bahá'í, the House of Justice upheld the above principles and stated that in each such village, while they should elect their Local Spiritual Assembly, they should continue to elect the local Council as required by the Government, and the functions of these two bodies should be kept distinct, even if their memberships were identical."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, April 13, 1983)

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

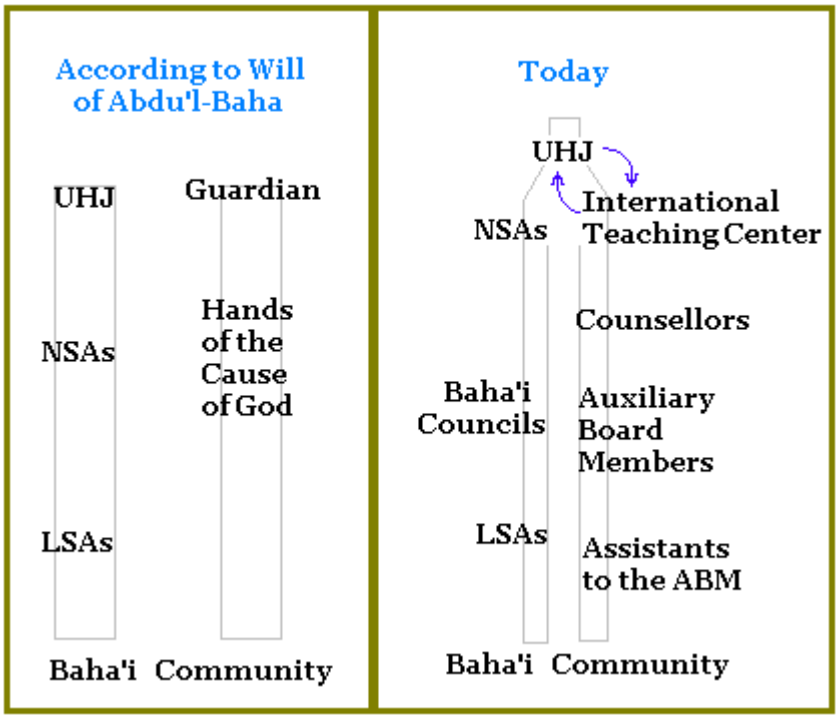
On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

> Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."
>
> (30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

> 270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.
>
> "...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.


According to Will of Abdu'l-Baha
UHJ
Guardian
NSAs
Hands of the Cause of God
LSAs
Baha'i Community
Today
UHJ
International Teaching Center
NSAs
Counsellors
Baha'i Councils
Auxiliary Board Members
LSAs
Assistants to the ABM
Baha'i Community

Comments

APRIL 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1944, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE STRUCTURAL BASIS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE FAITH...BEEN FIRMLY LAID BY THE CHAMPION-BUILDERS OF HIS WORLD ORDER IN EVERY STATE OF THE GREAT REPUBLIC OF THE WEST AND IN EVERY PROVINCE OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA."

April 13. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Turning Point in Bahá'í History" noting "...brilliantly accomplished. The structural basis of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has, through this superb victory, and on the very eve of the worldwide celebrations of the Centenary of His Faith, been firmly laid by the champion-builders of His World Order in every state of the Great Republic of the West and in every province of the Dominion of Canada."

Turning Point in Bahá'í History

13 APRIL 1944

The one remaining, and indeed the most challenging, task confronting the American Bahá'í Community has at long last been brilliantly accomplished. The structural basis of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has, through this superb victory, and on the very eve of the worldwide celebrations of the Centenary of His Faith, been firmly laid by the champion-builders of His World Order in every state of the Great Republic of the West and in every province of the Dominion of Canada.

In each of the republics of Central and South America, moreover, the banner of His undefeatable Faith has been implanted by the members of that same community, while in no less than thirteen Republics of Latin America as well as in two dependencies in the West Indies, Spiritual Assemblies have been established and are already functioning-a feat that has outstripped the goal originally fixed for the valiant members of that Community in their intercontinental sphere of Bahá'í activity. The exterior ornamentation of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of the West-the culmination of a forty year old enterprise repeatedly blessed and continually nurtured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá-has, furthermore, through a remarkable manifestation of the spirit of Bahá'í solidarity and self-sacrifice so powerfully animating the members

of that stalwart community, been successfully completed, more than a year in advance of the time set for its termination.

The triple task undertaken with such courage, confidence, zeal and determination-a task which ever since the inception of the Seven Year Plan has challenged and galvanized into action the entire body of the American believers and for the efficient prosecution of which processes of a divinely appointed Administrative Order had, during no less than sixteen years, been steadily evolving-is now finally accomplished and crowned with total victory.

The greatest collective enterprise ever launched by the Western followers of Bahá'u'lláh and indeed ever undertaken by any Bahá'í community in the course of an entire century, has been gloriously consummated. A victory of undying fame has marked the culmination of the fifty-year-long labors of the American Bahá'í community in the service of Bahá'u'lláh and has shed imperishable luster on the immortal records of His Faith during the first hundred years of its existence. The exploits that have marked the progress of this prodigious, this threefold enterprise, covering a field stretching from Alaska in the North to the extremity of Chile in the South, affecting the destinies of so great a variety of peoples and nations, involving such a tremendous expenditure of treasure and effort, calling forth so remarkable a spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice, and undertaken notwithstanding the vicious assaults and incessant machinations of the breakers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Covenant, and despite the perils, the trials and restrictions of a desolating war of unexampled severity, augur well for the successful prosecution, and indeed assure the ultimate victory, of the remaining stages of the Plan conceived, a quarter of a century ago by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American continent.

To the band of pioneers, whether settlers or itinerant teachers, who have forsaken their homes, who have scattered far and wide, who have willingly sacrificed their comfort, their health and even their lives for the prosecution of this Plan; to the several committees and their auxiliary agencies that have been entrusted with special and direct responsibility for its efficient and orderly development and who have discharged their high responsibilities with exemplary vigor, courage and fidelity; to the national representatives of the community itself, who have vigilantly and tirelessly supervised, directed and coordinated the unfolding processes of this vast undertaking ever since its inception; to all those who, though not in the forefront of battle, have through their financial assistance and through the

instrumentality of their deputies, contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the Plan, I myself, as well as the entire Bahá'í world, owe a debt of gratitude that no one can measure or describe. To the sacrifices they have made, to the courage they have so consistently shown, to the fidelity they have so remarkably displayed, to the resourcefulness, the discipline, the constancy and devotion they have so abundantly demonstrated future generations, viewing the magnitude of their labors in their proper perspective, will no doubt pay adequate tribute-a tribute no less ardent and well-deserved than the recognition extended by the present-day builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh to the Dawn-Breakers, whose shining deeds have signalized the birth of the Heroic Age of His Faith.

To the elected representatives of all the Bahá'í communities of the New World, assembled beneath the Dome of the Mother Temple of the West, on the occasion of the historic, first All-America Bahá'í Convention-a convention at which every state and province in the North American continent is represented, in which the representatives of every Republic of Latin America have been invited to participate, whose delegates have been elected, for the first time in American Bahá'í history, by all local communities already possessing Assemblies, by all groups and isolated believers throughout the United States and Canada, and whose proceedings will be for ever associated with the celebration of the Centenary of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Bahá'í Faith in the Western Hemisphere, and of the completion of the exterior ornamentation of the First Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of the West-to all the privileged attendants of such an epoch-making Convention, I, on my own behalf, as well as in the name of all Bahá'í Communities sharing with them, at this great turning-point in the history of our Faith, the joys and triumphs of this solemn hour, feel moved to convey the expression of our loving admiration, our joy and our gratitude for the brilliant conclusion of what posterity will no doubt acclaim as one of the most stirring episodes in the history of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as one of the most momentous enterprises undertaken during the entire course of the first Century of the Bahá'í Era.

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1994, CARMEN DE BURAFATO DIED CELAYA, MEXICO. ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND SAMUEL BURAFATO, SHE PIONEERED TO MEXICO AND THE TWO WERE ELECTED TO THE INAUGURAL NSA OF MEXICO IN 1961. SHE ALSO SERVED AS A COUNSELLOR ON THE CONTINENTAL BOARDS OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE AMERICAS.

April 14. On this date in 1994, Carmen de Burafato died Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico. Along with her husband Samuel Burafato, she pioneered to Mexico in 1957 and the two were elected to the inaugural NSA of Mexico in 1961. She also served as a Counsellor on the Continental Boards of Central America and the Americas.

Details of Carmens early life are scarce, other than that she was from Mexico. She became a Bahá'í in the San Francisco Bay area in 1948, and married US veteran Samuel Burafato in 1950. The two pioneered to Mexico in 1957 during the Ten Year Crusade after Carmen wrote a letter to Shoghi Effendi asking how they could serve the Faith and received a reply saying that she should return to Mexico. Sam became a Bahá'í shortly after the move.

In 1961 Carmen and her husband were elected to the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico with Samuel serving as Chairman and Carmen serving as recording secretary. When Enoch Olinga visited Mexico in May, 1961, Carmen served as interpreter for him accompanying him to several pastoral villages. In 1964 she was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member for propagation of the Faith assisting Ugo Giachery with his work as Hand of the Cause in Mexico, Central America and the Antilles. In 1967 she assisted in organizing an International Conference in Panama where the cornerstone of the Panama Temple was laid, delivering invitations to embassies and consulates.

In 1968 Carmen was appointed an inaugural Counsellor for Central America by the Universal House of Justice. In 1980 she was appointed for a five year term to the Continental Board of the Americas, formed when the Board for Central America was merged with the Boards for North and South America. She was re-elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico after her term as Counsellor ended and served on the body until 1992. She served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of San Miguel Allende until passing in 1994.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the following to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico following her Assembly:

> DEEPLY SADDENED LOSS OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH CARMEN BURAFATO. HER EXTENSIVE TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, CROWNED BY HER MANY YEARS AS COUNSELLOR IN THE AMERICAS, ARE UNFORGETTABLE. MAY HER EXAMPLE INSPIRE THE MEXICAN BELIEVERS NEW HEIGHTS OF DEDICATION. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS MEXICO. OFFERING FERVENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER HUSBAND, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, OWEN BATTRICK DIED IN TAHITI. FROM ENGLAND, HE PIONEERED TO NEW CALEDONIA, SERVED ON THE REGIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS AS SECRETARY, ON THE NSA OF NEW ZEALAND AS TREASURER, AND AS AN AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER AND COUNSELLOR FOR AUSTRALASIA.

April 14. On this date in 1995, Owen Battrick died in Tahiti. Originally from England, he pioneered to New Caledonia, served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific Islands as secretary, on the NSA of New Zealand as treasurer, and as an Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor for Australasia.

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, SHOGHI EFFENDI "IN REPLY TO A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER BRAHMA IS 'TO BE CONSIDERED AS REFERRING TO ABSOLUTE DIETY' AND KRISHNA 'AS THE PROPHET OF THE HINDU RELIGION', HIS SECRETARY WROTE '. . . SUCH MATTERS, AS NO REFERENCE OCCURS TO THEM IN THE TEACHINGS, ARE LEFT..'"

April 14. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi "in reply to a question as to whether Brahma is 'to be considered as referring to absolute diety' and Krishna 'as the Prophet of the Hindu Religion', his secretary wrote '. . . such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left for students of history and religion to resolve and clarify.' "

From *Scriptures of Previous Dispensations*, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.,,,

> "Concerning Hindu prophecies of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and the relationship of the Hindu and Bahá'í Faiths, nothing authentic and specific is available at the World Centre, apart from the Guardian's statement in God Passes By that 'To Him the Bhagavad-Gita of the Hindus had referred as the "Most Great Spirit," the "Tenth Avatar", the "Immaculate Manifestation of the Krishna"', (p. 95); and a brief reference to Bahá'u'lláh as 'to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna . . .' (p. 94). Bahá'í teachings on progressive revelation do, of course, bear on the relationship of these Faiths. In a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian it is also written that 'We cannot be sure of the authenticity of the scriptures of Buddha and Krishna . . . ' (November 25, 1950); and in reply to a question as to whether Brahma is 'to be considered as referring to absolute diety' and Krishna 'as the Prophet of the Hindu Religion', his secretary wrote '. . . such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left for students of history and religion to resolve and clarify.' (April 14, 1941)"
>
> (From a letter dated September 1, 1977 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

Also here...

1696. Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism (Following are some quotations taken from a compilation of extracts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian on these and related subjects, enclosed with a letter to an individual believer on November 30, 1980 from the Universal House of Justice)

Lesser Prophets: "Regarding your questions: We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur'an, the Bible and our own Scriptures. For only these can we consider authentic Books."

(March 13, 1950, to an individual believer)

Asiatic Prophets: "Regarding your questions: The only reason there is not more mention of the Asiatic prophets is because their names seem to be lost in the mists of ancient history. Buddha is mentioned and Zoroaster in our scriptures--both non-Jewish prophets or non-semitic prophets. We are taught there always have been Manifestations of God, but we do not have any record of their names."

(October 4, 1950, to an individual believer)

Scriptures of Buddha and Krishna: "We cannot be sure of the authenticity of the scriptures of Buddha and Krishna, so we certainly cannot draw any conclusions about virgin births mentioned in them. There is no reference to this subject in our teachings, so the Guardian cannot pronounce an opinion.

"As our teachings do not state Zoroaster is the connecting link between the Euphrates and the Prophets in India, we cannot assert this.

"Abraham and Krishna are two separate individuals, with no connection that we know of.

"We know no more about the prophets mentioned in the Iqan than what Bahá'u'lláh states in that Book."

(November 25, 1950, to an individual believer)

Brahma and Krishna: "Your question concerning Brahma and Krishna: Such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left for students of history and religion to resolve and clarify."

(April 14, 1941, to an individual believer)

Comments

Anonymous: Baha'u'llah has referenced in one of His Tablets a portion of Hafiz's poem:شکر شکن شوند همه طوطیان هند زین قند پارسی کهبه بنگاله می رود I have my own theories, but Baha'u'llah never wrote anything or referenced any past poets / ulama for no reason.Here is the complete Tablet from OceanOfLights:﴿هُوَالعَلیُّ الأعْلی ﴾شکر شکن شوند همه طوطیان هند زین قند پارسی که به بنگاله میرودhttps://oceanoflights.org/bahaullah-st-099-fa/I leave it to the reader / ChatGPT / translators to make a personal judgement or interpretation of this loving Tablet to one of His disciples to console him (or her) and keep him in True Path.

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1966, JESSIE REVELL, WHO HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL, SERVING AS ITS TREASURER, DIED IN HAIFA, ISRAEL.

April 14. On this date in 1966, Jessie Revell, who had been a member of the International Bahá'í Council, serving as its Treasurer, died in Haifa, Israel.

Jessie Revell, along with her sister Ethel, became a Bahá'í in Philadelphia around 1906 through Mrs. Annie McKinney, when she attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!'

Jessie Revell was once addressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha in these words:

> "O thou who art firm in the Covenant! ... Notwithstanding the lack of time, I write thee this letter that thou mayest know how dear thou art to me. As thou art brilliant and pure and hast no wish but to serve the Cause of God and promulgate the divine teachings, I pray and entreat at the threshold of God and beg for thee limitless assistance and bounty. ... Thou must engage in those regions, day and night, in service. ... As to the children with whom thou art speaking, thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ..." ('Abdu'l-Baha, Star of the West, vol. X, p. 317)

Jessie Revell's brilliant record of service to the Cause of Baha'u'llah, extending from early in the century, came to an end with her passing in Haifa on April 14, 1966. Her story is best told in the words of her devoted sister, Ethel Revell.

"My mother, my sister and I first heard of the Faith in Philadelphia -- it was approximately 1906 -- through Mrs. Annie McKinney, and attended the firesides of Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham. On the evening when Jessie first heard Mrs. Brittingham speak on the Faith, Jessie followed her to the door as the speaker departed and said, 'I cannot remember all you said tonight, but I want what you have!' When she accepted the Faith she wrote to 'Abdu'l-Baha and mentioned that our father had passed away when we were very young. The Master replied -- I believe in these exact

words -- 'The real fatherhood is the spiritual fatherhood. Therefore rest thou assured that thou art the beloved daughter.'

"In the early days of her Baha'i life, as there was but little literature available to the friends, Jessie, who was then employed in an office, would spend her evenings typing copies of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha and sharing them with the Baha'is, who in turn would recopy them and pass them along to other believers.

"Jessie's dearest wish was to be of service to the Cause. 'Abdu'l-Baha visited Philadelphia in June, 1912. After speaking to the friends on Sunday morning at the Rittenhouse Hotel where He was staying, the Master took a short walk, during which time Jessie and a brother visited the various newspaper offices with material on the Faith which appeared in the papers the following day.

"During the meeting at the hotel, 'Abdu'l-Baha said to our mother that He would see us at nine o'clock the following morning at our house. Excitedly, everyone spread the news and the humble home was crowded. The Master spoke to the friends most beautifully and touchingly about the life of Baha'u'llah. Afterwards He went upstairs, and each one had a brief interview with him. When Jessie's turn came, she said 'I would like to be of service in the Kingdom.' 'Abdu'l-Baha replied, 'You are a smiling angel; you will be of service in the Kingdom.'

"Jessie visited 'Abdu'l-Baha in New York City a few days before He sailed from America. As she was taking leave the Master said that He would see her again. Jessie always lived in the thought of again seeing Him on this earth. In 1921 she received a Tablet in which He told her she had permission to make her pilgrimage in the winter of that year. Everything was in order: the expense of her voyage was the loving gift of a Baha'i friend; her employer consented to her leave of absence and agreed to hold open her position until she returned; her plans were all made. When the news reached her of the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha she was completely heartbroken. Slowly, painfully she reconciled herself to the realization that her meeting with the Master was not to be on this physical plane. At the suggest ion of Mrs. Brittingham she postponed her pilgrimage for a few years and was very happy she did so, because when she arrived in Haifa she was able to meet the beloved Guardian which would not have been the case had she gone at the time originally planned.

"One day during her pilgrimage Shoghi Effendi invited her to stroll up Mount Carmel with him to visit the Shrine of the Bab. On that walk he said that the Baha'is must make a superhuman effort. Jessie often said there was something about the way the Guardian said 'superhuman' that engraved it for all time in her heart.

"Jessie constantly searched for ways of meeting souls who were longing for truth. With this object in view she had just completed a course in public speaking when the invitation came to travel to Haifa to assist the beloved Guardian. When she told of receiving this cable, she said she believed she lost consciousness for a moment, it was so overwhelming."

A tribute to Jessie Revell by Mr. and Mrs. Lyall Hadden published in the Bulletin of the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia at the time of her death describes her early services in that community:

"Jessie's entire life was one of service to the Faith, first here in Pennsylvania where she served for many years on the Spiritual Assembly of Philadelphia and the regional teaching committee, and later in Haifa where she and Ethel were summoned by the Guardian in 1951.

"Her years of service in Haifa, her many travels throughout the world on behalf of the Faith, are well known to all, but we in Pennsylvania have a deeper knowledge of, and a great love for, this little person who gave of her time and energy so cheerfully and efficiently. No distance was too far for Jessie to travel; no demand upon her time too great in service to Baha'u'llah.

"When we first met the Revells back in 1936 both Jessie and Ethel were carrying out 'Abdu'l-Baha's instructions in a most energetic and able manner. We had just arrived in the Philadelphia area from New York where we had been briefly introduced to the Faith. Almost immediately upon our arrival Jessie, Ethel and their mother came to call upon us, and every week thereafter these dear and faithful souls traveled the twenty miles to our home to further our instruction in the Faith of Baha'u'llah. After we declared our faith they, true to the Master's wish, continued to visit every Saturday morning to instruct our three small sons. So effective were their teaching methods that at one children's session at Davison Baha'i School our boys were asked to refrain from raising their hands to answer questions and let some of the other children have the opportunity. 'Thy pure breath will undoubtedly exert its influence upon them. ...'

"Many times we met the Revell sisters and drove them to Reading where they had engaged a room in order to hold Baha'i meetings. Whether one person attended, or a dozen, or no one at all, those two devoted believers were always there on the designated night, and our own knowledge was strengthened and deepened."

It is fitting that Jessie Revell's services in the Holy Land be glimpsed through the eyes of one of the countless pilgrims whose hearts she won. An account of her passing appeared in the Alaskan Baha'i News, September, 1966:

"Late in 1950 two self-effacing little ladies from Philadelphia, Ethel and Jessie Revell, received a cablegram: WELCOME YOUR PRESENCE HAIFA -- SHOGHI. These two lovely souls were overwhelmed and puzzled, but they soon began to pack. ...

"For Jessie, this was a return to the land of her heart's desire. ... What kind of woman was this 'little giant', barely five feet tall, who earned the trust, love and admiration of Shoghi Effendi, and became a loyal companion of Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum and the friend and counsellor of every pilgrim? The beloved Guardian received many letters from American believers but it was the rare Baha'i who, like Jessie, would write to him, as she did in 1948, to thank him for his peerless translation of Prayers and Meditations.

"En route to Haifa the Revell sisters found an additional opportunity to proclaim the Faith. Three hundred miles east of the Azores, a floating observance of World Religion Day was held on the S.S. LaGuardia by Jessie and Ethel. Fifty people of various nationalities attended in response to the invitation listed in the ship's calendar."

Jessie Revell's services in Haifa were manifold: she was entrusted by the Guardian shortly after her arrival with the task of sending and collecting all his mail; this was a task to which he attached great importance as during his absences from the Holy Land no one had access to him except his "postman" whose integrity must be of the highest order. Even after the Guardian's passing she continued to collect the mail, in spite of her age, until the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In 1951 she was appointed treasurer of the International Baha'i Council by the Guardian and after its election in 1961 continued to hold the same office. Her services to the Guardian and to the World Center in these and other capacities brought her in contact with many people in Haifa where she was widely known and respected as a Baha'i.

"How Jessie loved to be with the pilgrims," Ethel Revell testifies. "She loved to look after their comfort and received them with a loving welcome, visiting with them, helping them on their shopping trips. At times the pilgrims arrived very late at night from certain countries. On one occasion a group of dear pilgrims came at about eleven-thirty at night. It was raining heavily. They were shown their rooms and made comfortable by Jessie. The next morning Jessie awakened to find she had slept peacefully all night in a wet raincoat!"

A pilgrim writes, "She won the hearts of all the pilgrims and saw the best, the true Baha'i, in everyone. In her quiet, unassuming way she would seek every avenue to serve her beloved Faith. No task was too great or too small. Pilgrims around the world treasure the picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Philadelphia or some other small token from the Revell sisters. Dearly loved by the

people of Haifa, they would voice concern: 'Please talk Miss Jessie into getting a car -- a little one will do; she goes back and forth so much; I worry for her.' A friend of 'Miss Jessie's' would get a special price in the souvenir shops. Everyone in Haifa knew her; everyone loved her. Her calm, assured manner, regardless of the turbulence about her, seemed to be in natural setting in Haifa. While the Shrines, of course, stand apart as the very core of pilgrimage, Haifa unfailingly brings to mind Jessie Revell."

Before his passing Shoghi Effendi had himself announced that Jessie Revell would attend the Intercontinental Conference to be held in the United States in 1958, in addition to the Hand of the Cause he had delegated to represent him on that occasion. In 1961 she accompanied Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum on her trip to Australia to open the Mother Temple of the Antipodes to public worship. When Amatu'l-Baha was taken ill, Jessie Revell, at her request, visited the New Zealand Baha'i community in her stead, bringing the spirit of the beloved Guardian to all the friends there.

"I trust and pray that some day you may be enabled to visit Persia, and there render a distinct service to the cause," Shoghi Effendi wrote to her on December 17, 1928. "Wherever you are, the Beloved will watch over you and sustain you, and you must feel encouraged to realize that your services, your faith and constancy, will in time be fully rewarded."

Ethel's words describe the joy her sister experienced in realizing this long-held hope:

"Persia and Turkey were the last countries which Jessie visited. She traveled to Iran just seven months before she passed away. To be in the land of Baha'u'llah was such a joy to her, to visit all the Holy Places such a sacred experience. Then too, the believers were so thoughtful, kind and hospitable in a quiet and efficient manner that she really felt at home. It seemed to me that with that accomplished, she in a way relaxed somewhat. A few days before she departed she said to me, 'Since I went to Persia, I seem to be living there all the time.'"

Jessie Revell died in Haifa on April 14, 1966.

Upon her death the Universal House of Justice cabled the following message:

> WITH PROFOUND GRIEF ANNOUNCE PASSING JESSIE REVELL HER TIRELESS STEADFAST DEVOTION FAITH SINCE BEFORE MASTER'S VISIT AMERICAN CONTINENT EARNED LOVE TRUST ADMIRATION SHOGHI EFFENDI CROWNED BY APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL BAHA'I COUNCIL DISTINGUISHED BY SERVICE TREASURER BOTH APPOINTED ELECTED COUNCILS. URGE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES

HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS TRIBUTE UNFORGETTABLE EXEMPLARY SERVICES FAITH.

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1897, ETHEL REVELL WAS BORN. SHE WAS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL SERVING AS BOTH AN ELECTED AND APPOINTED MEMBER. ETHEL WAS THE DAUGHTER OF MARY J. REVELL, KNOWN AS MOTHER REVELL FOR HER ROLE IN FOUNDING THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

April 14. On this date in 1897, Ethel Revell was born. She was a member of the International Bahá'í Council serving as both an elected and appointed member, and served for a time as the Western Assistant Secretary. Ethel was the daughter of Mary J. Revell, known as Mother Revell for her role in founding the Bahá'í community of Philadelphia.

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1980, THE NSA OF GERMANY WROTE THE UHJ CONCERNING A NEWSPAPER'S PUBLISHING A LETTER FROM SWISS EX-BAHÁ'Í FRANCESCO FICICCHIA. IN 1995 UDO SCHAEFER AUTHORED "DESINFORMATION ALS METHODE" AS A REFUTATION TO FICICCHIA'S "DER BAHÁ'ISMUS"

April 14. On this date in 1980, the NSA of Germany wrote the Universal House of Justice concerning a newspaper's publishing a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer, German Bahá'í author and lawyer who served on the NSA of Germany, authored *Desinformation als Methode* as a refutation to Francesco Ficicchia's *Der Bahá'ismus — Weltreligion der Zukunft?*. Although *Der Bahá'ismus* was never translated into English, Schaefer's *Desinformation als Methode* was published in 2001 in English as *Making the Crooked Straight*, which was reviewed by Denis MacEoin.

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

7 May 1980

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 14 April 1980 enclosing the copy of that part of page 15 of the issue of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung for 14 March 1980, on which the letter from Francesco Ficicchia was published.

The House of Justice feels that the best course is to ignore this disgraceful attack on the Faith, rather than to make any rebuttal. Your Assembly should, however, be prepared to answer any enquiries that you may receive as a result of this article, whether from Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís. To assist you in this, we enclose extracts from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, which touch on matters raised by Mr. Ficicchia. You are also, no doubt, aware that a Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by A. G. Tumansky was published in 1899. A translation of the complete text into English, made by two former Presbyterian missionaries in Iran, was published by The Royal Asiatic Society in 1961; it is accompanied by highly prejudiced and misleading footnotes and introduction, and the inadequacy of the translation itself is

immediately apparent to anyone who compares passages with those that Shoghi Effendi translated. The exisence of these two published translations, however, demonstrates the falsity of Ficicchia's statement that no complete translation exists. A far clearer understanding of the contents of the Most Holy Book, however, than given by either translation, is presented in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which gives not only the laws of the Aqdas themselves, but also includes the elucidations given by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the "Questions and Answers," and contains many explanatory annotation provided by the House of Justice.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

27 May 1980

Extracts from a reply written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to questions about the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

The institution of the Covenant has a direct bearing on the implementation of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This Book is the repository of the basic laws for the Dispensation to be implemented gradually in accordance with the guidance given by God through those infallible Institutions which lie at the heart of the Covenant. Indeed, one of those Institutions, the Universal House of Justice, has been given by Bahá'u'lláh the task not only of applying the laws but of supplementing them and of making laws on all matters not explicitly covered in the Sacred Text. An English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was made by Dr. Earl E. Elder and Dr. William McE. Miller, two men who were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia and have long been strongly antagonistic to the Faith. A great many of the statements that they make about its history are based on the assertions of Covenant-breakers or opponents of the Faith—rather like a history of Christianity based primarily on statements by enemies of Jesus Christ. Dr. Miller, for example, places great reliance on a document called the "Nuqṭatu'l-Káf," which is, in fact, spurious, as is fully demonstrated by the Hand of the Cause Ḥasan Balyúzí in his book Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith.

The reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are given in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself is the kernel of a vast structure of Bahá'í law that will have to come into being in the years and centuries ahead as the unity of mankind is established and develops. Thus to properly understand the contents of that Book one should also read many other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh relating to them, as well as the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, and realize that great areas of detail have been

left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to fill in and to vary in accordance with the needs of a developing society. For example:

1 The law of divorce in the Aqdas seems to apply only to a husband divorcing his wife, and not vice versa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian have made it quite clear that the principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" applies equally to men and women, and the law has always been implemented in this way. Such elucidations are one of the specific functions intended by Bahá'u'lláh for the authoritative Interpreter.

2 The Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to allow bigamy. This is explained in Note 17 on page 59 of the Synopsis and Codification: "The text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf: 'Regarding Bahá'í marriage: in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practiced.'"

This is an authoritative interpretation, and as an interpretation states what is intended by the original text, it is correct to say that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas prohibits plurality of wives. This method of establishing monogamy as the law of the Faith is one example of the process referred to in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification whereby there is a progressive disclosure of the full meaning of the laws of the Faith as the Dispensation unfolds.

3 The punishments prescribed for theft, murder and arson are given only in barest outline. It is explained in Note 42 on page 64 of the Synopsis and Codification that these punishments are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice. The punishment for theft, for example, says that for the third offense a mark must be placed on the thief's forehead (nothing is said about branding), so that people will be warned of his proclivities. All details of how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to decide when the law has to be applied. Similarly, merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for murder and arson are given in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment or life imprisonment. Such matters as degrees of offense and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of

prevailing conditions when the law is in operation. Arson, as you yourself can see from the newspapers, is becoming an increasingly frequent offense—scarcely a day passes without some building being burned or blown up, often causing agonizing death to innocent people. Bahá'u'lláh prescribes that a person who burns a house intentionally is to be burned or imprisoned for life, but again, the application of these punishments, the method of carrying them out and the fixing of degrees of offense are left to the Universal House of Justice. Obviously there is a tremendous difference in the degree of the offense of a person who burns down an empty warehouse from that of one who sets fire to a school full of children.

From the above examples it should be clear why a translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas made without proper comprehensive footnotes referring to other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which elucidate His laws as well as to interpretations made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, can give a very misleading impression—quite apart from the problem of achieving a beauty of style in the English which can approach that of the original, an aspect in which the Elder-Miller translation falls woefully short.

Although there is no explicit reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Synopsis and Codification lists "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship." On page 214 of God Passes By, when summarizing the contents of the Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that in it Bahá'u'lláh "anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship," and again, on page 147 of The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh the Guardian refers to "the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship." One such implication is in the matter of Ḥuqúqu'lláh (The Right of God), which is ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas without provision being made for who is to receive it; in His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá fills this gap by stating "It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God …" Other implications of this institution can be seen in the terms in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá is appointed as the Successor of Bahá'u'lláh and the Interpreter of His Teachings. The faithful are enjoined to turn their faces towards the one whom "God hath purposed" and who "hath branched from this Ancient Root" and are bidden to refer whatsoever they do not understand in the Bahá'í writings to him who "hath branched from this mighty Stock." Yet another can be seen in the provision of the Aqdas concerning the disposition of international endowments—a passage which not only refers this matter to the Aghṣán (male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh) but also provides for what should happen should the line of Aghṣán end before the coming into being of the Universal House of Justice. Thus the "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship" is correctly included in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Francesco Ficicchia
BAHĀ'Ī
Einheitsreligion
und
globale Theokratie
Ein kritischer Einblick in die
Universalreligion der Zukunft

Comments

APRIL 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ GAVE HIS FIRST PUBLIC ADDRESS IN NORTH AMERICA, AT THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NEW YORK. THE SPEECH, WIDELY COVERED IN THE PRESS, WAS LATER PUBLISHED IN THE "PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE," AS "TALK AT CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION."

April 14. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his first public address in North America, at the Church of the Ascension, an Episcopal church in New York. The speech, widely covered in the press, was later published in the *Promulgation of Universal Peace* as "Talk at Church of the Ascension," with notes by Ahmad Sohrab ('Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter, later declared a Covenant-breaker by Shoghi Effendi) and Howard MacNutt (later named a Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi).

"Talk at Church of the Ascension"...

> In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."
>
> The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of Divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits. The light of truth is the divine teaching, heavenly instruction, merciful principles and spiritual civilization. Since my arrival in this country I find that material civilization has progressed greatly, that commerce has attained the utmost degree of expansion; arts, agriculture and all details of material civilization have reached the highest stage of perfection, but spiritual civilization has been left behind. Material civilization is like unto the lamp, while spiritual civilization is the light in that lamp. If the material and spiritual civilization become united, then we will have the light and the lamp together, and the outcome will be perfect. For material civilization is like unto a beautiful body, and spiritual civilization is like unto the spirit of life. If that wondrous spirit of life enters this beautiful body, the body will become a channel for the distribution and development of the perfections of humanity.

Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is the Most Great Peace of mankind. Among His principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this.

For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

All the Prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore, we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not fully manifest.

In Persia among the various religions and sects there were intense differences. Bahá'u'lláh appeared in that country and founded the spiritual civilization. He established affiliation among the various peoples, promoted the oneness of the human world and unfurled the banner of the Most Great Peace. He wrote special Epistles covering these facts to all the kings and rulers of nations. Sixty years ago He conveyed His message to the leaders of the political world and to high dignitaries of the spiritual world. Therefore, spiritual civilization is progressing in the Orient, and oneness of humanity and peace among the nations is being accomplished step by step. Now I find a strong movement for universal peace emanating from America. It is my hope that this standard of the oneness of the world of humanity may be upraised with the utmost solidity so that the Orient and Occident may become perfectly reconciled and attain complete intercommunication, the hearts of the East and West become united and attracted, real union become unveiled, the light of guidance shine, divine effulgences be seen day by day so that the world of humanity may find complete tranquillity, the eternal happiness of man become evident and the hearts of the people of the world be as mirrors in which the rays of the Sun of Reality may be reflected. Consequently, it is my request that you should strive so that the light of reality may shine and the everlasting felicity of the world of man become apparent.

I will pray for you so you may attain this everlasting happiness. When I arrived in this city, I was made very happy, for I perceived that the people here have capacity for divine bestowals and have worthiness for the civilization of heaven. I pray that you may attain to all merciful bounties.

O Almighty! O God! O Thou compassionate One! This servant of Thine has hastened to the regions of the West from the uttermost parts of the East that, perchance, these nostrils may be perfumed by the fragrances of Thy bestowals; that the breeze of the rose garden of guidance may blow over these cities; that the people may attain to the capacity of receiving Thy favors; that the hearts may be rejoiced through Thy glad tidings; that the eyes may behold the light of reality; that the ears may hearken to the call of the Kingdom. O Almighty! Illumine the hearts. O kind God! Make the souls the envy of the rose garden and the meadow. O incomparable Beloved! Waft the fragrance of Thy bounty. Radiate the lights of compassion so that the hearts may be cleansed and purified and that they may take a share and portion from Thy confirmations. Verily, this congregation is seeking

Thy path, searching for Thy mystery, beholding Thy face and desiring to be characterized with Thine attributes.

O Almighty! Confer Thou infinite bounties. Bestow Thine inexhaustible treasury so that these impotent ones may become powerful.

Verily, Thou art the Kind. Thou art the Generous. Thou art the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.

In 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1924, HADI AFSAHI WAS BORN IN TEHRAN, IRAN. A NOTABLE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í, HE PIONEERED TO SWEDEN, WHERE HE SERVED ON THE INAUGURAL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AND LATER AS AN AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER FOR THE CONTINENTAL BOARD OF COUNSELLORS FOR EUROPE.

April 15. On this date in 1924, Hadi Afsahi was born in Tehran, Iran. A notable Iranian Bahá'í, he pioneered to Sweden, where he served on the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly and later as an Auxiliary Board member for the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe.

A fourth generation Bahá'í, Hadi Afsahi was born on April 15, 1924 in Tehran, Iran, and received his early education at the Bahá'í Tarbíyat School in that city. After earning a degree in civil engineering from the University of Tehran he worked with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from 1947 to 1959 and pioneered to two different localities within the country. Mr. Afsahi was a member of the first Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Iranian cities of Masjid-i-Sulayman and Gachsaran. He married Mehri Golmohammadi in 1953, and the couple had two children, May and Aram. In January 1960, Mr. Afsahi left Iran for Sweden, settling in Uppsala, a pioneer goal city, to be joined several months later by his family. In Sweden, he served as a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Uppsala and was also a member of the country's National Teaching Committee from 1960 to 1967. Elected as a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sweden, he served on that body from 1962 until 1968, when he was appointed as a member of the Auxiliary Board of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe, in which capacity he served until 1993.

Mr. Afsahi made many trips throughout Sweden and internationally to teach the Bahá'í Faith. Within Sweden, he was active in teaching minority groups such as the Roma people and the native Sámi people of Lapland. During his years in Sweden Mr. Afsahi worked as a high school teacher of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, until his retirement in 1989. He was also involved with the United Nations Association and the National Sámi Organization.

Hadi Afsahi died on April 28, 2003. In its message after his passing, the Universal House of Justice wrote of his "long-serving and steadfast devotion, his warm and radiant spirit, and his indefatigable dedication to the teaching work," which it "recalled with deep gratitude".

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, "THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE POINTS OUT THAT CALAMITIES HAVE BEEN AND ARE OCCURRING AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAPPEN UNTIL MANKIND HAS BEEN CHASTENED SUFFICIENTLY TO ACCEPT THE MANIFESTATION FOR THIS DAY."

April 15. On this date in 1976, "The House of Justice points out that calamities have been and are occurring and will continue to happen until mankind has been chastened sufficiently to accept the Manifestation for this day. Abdu'l-Bahá anticipated that the Lesser Peace could be established before the end of the twentieth century."

427. Calamities Will Continue Until Mankind is Chastened Sufficiently...

"You make reference to calamities and request specific answers if there are any as to when they may occur and with what magnitude. The House of Justice noted your comments that you have read what Bahá'u'lláh had to say about the collapse of the old world order and the coming of the new, and that in recent times friends returning from their pilgrimages spoke of meetings with Hands of the Cause and members of the House of Justice in which the coming of great world upheavals was related to a time 'around the end of the Five Year Plan and afterwards'. The House of Justice points out that calamities have been and are occurring and will continue to happen until mankind has been chastened sufficiently to accept the Manifestation for this day. Abdu'l-Bahá anticipated that the Lesser Peace could be established before the end of the twentieth century. However, Bahá'ís should not be diverted from the work of the Cause by the fear of catastrophes but should try to understand why they occur. The beloved Guardian, in innumerable places, has explained the reasons for these occurrences, and since they happen from time to time as explained above we should not be concerned as to when they occur."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 15, 1976)

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, THE UHJ WROTE THAT "ABDU'L-BAHÁ ANTICIPATED THAT THE LESSER PEACE COULD BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY."

April 15. On this date in 1976, "The House of Justice points out that calamities have been and are occurring and will continue to happen until mankind has been chastened sufficiently to accept the Manifestation for this day. Abdu'l-Bahá anticipated that the Lesser Peace could be established before the end of the twentieth century."

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>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 15, 1976)

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1965, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF THE U.S. "A VERY GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE PEACE AND WELL-BEING OF THE WORLD IS BORNE BY THE YOUTH OF TODAY. LET THE BAHÁ'Í YOUTH BY THE POWER OF THE CAUSE THEY ESPOUSE BE THE SHINING EXAMPLE FOR THEIR COMPANIONS."

April 15. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of the U.S. "A very great responsibility for the future peace and well-being of the world is borne by the youth of today. Let the Bahá'í youth by the power of the Cause they espouse be the shining example for their companions."

> 2142. Future Peace--Great Responsibility Borne by Youth
>
> "A very great responsibility for the future peace and well-being of the world is borne by the youth of today. Let the Bahá'í youth by the power of the Cause they espouse be the shining example for their companions."
>
> (From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 15, 1965)

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 2001, THE ONLINE MAGAZINE THEMESTREAM PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE TITLED "THE TALISMAN CRACKDOWN" BY KAREN BACQUET, WHO WAS LATER NAMED AS AN APOSTATE BY MOOJAN MOMEN IN "MARGINALITY AND APOSTASY IN THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY." FOR BACKGROUND SEE THE ...

April 15. On this date in 2001, the online magazine *Themestream* published an article titled "The Talisman Crackdown" by Karen Bacquet, who was later named as an apostate by Moojan Momen in "Marginality and Apostasy in the Bahá'í Community." For background see the Universal House of Justice's letter dated April 7, 1999, titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" (also here) and Juan Cole's response, dated June 14, 1999, titled "Commentary on Letter of Universal House of Justice dated April 7, 1999".

The Talisman Crackdown The Baha'i Faith is often described as an open and tolerant religion, classed with New Age groups or Unitarian Universalists because of its teachings concerning the unity of all religions, racial harmony, and world peace. What is little-known even within the Baha'i community is that the elected Baha'i institutions have historically kept strict control of any public information concerning the religion and has been willing to use threats and sanctions to silence members who have unorthodox views.

The Baha'i Faith was founded in 1863 by the Iranian prophet Baha'u'llah (1817-92). While this young religion within the milieu of Shi'ih Islam, it has been in the U.S. since the turn of the century. It has, however, experienced slow growth for most of that time. One exception to this trend was during the late '60s and early '70s when young baby-boomers were engaged in a great deal of spiritual seeking and began joining alternative religions in large numbers. Some of the young people who joined the Baha'i Faith during this period planned their lives in order to be of service to their new-found faith -- studying religion, Middle Eastern history, and learning Arabic and Persian.

When Baha'i scriptures support scholarship, conservative administrators were quite mistrustful of what has been called "the culture of critical discourse" of these young intellectuals. There had been a few clashes between the two, even before the rise of cyberspace. In the late '70s, some of them formed a study group in the Los Angeles area, putting out a small, local newsletter. This newsletter was effectively silenced when the National Spiritual Assembly insisted that it be

subject to "prepublication review" -- a requirement for all publications by Baha'i writers when they address Baha'i subjects, even when the material is being sent to non-Baha'i publishers. This review process, which Baha'i officials insist is not censorship, is resented by many Baha'i writers and intellectuals. The effect on the community at large is that before the popularity of the Internet in the '90s, few Baha'is had ever heard anything but "official" views concerning Baha'i issues.

Another attempt at getting unofficial views published in the community was the magazine Dialogue, which was published briefly in the mid-1980s. Although the editors and staff cooperated with the often cumbersome review process, the magazine was viewed with great suspicion by the National Spiritual Assembly. At the 1988 National Convention, when delegates from around the country gathered to elect the next year's Assembly, External Affairs Secretary Firuz Kazemzadeh denounced a particular article slated for publication called A Modest Proposal and described those involved with the magazine as "dissidents". Faced with such hostility, and with their reputation thus ruined in the eyes of the community, the editors stopped publication. Several of those involved in the L.A. study group and Dialogue magazine were later active participants on the Talisman forum.

The nucleus of the email forum called "Talisman" began when two old friends, Professor Juan R.I. Cole of the University of Michigan and Professor John Walbridge of the University of Indiana began an intense email correspondence concerning some aspects of early Baha'i history. (The results of this research can be seen in Cole's book Modernity and the Millennium, available through Amazon.) Both men had been Baha'is for more than twenty years, and had been "pioneers" (Baha'i missionaries) in the Middle East during thier youth. In the early 1990s, these email discussions continued on a small forum called, somewhat whimsically, "Majnun"(this Arabic word means "crazy"). The members of Majnun were all scholars and specialists, and the forum was quite academic.

In 1994, Walbridge started up Talisman, a more open forum on a big listserv at the University of Indiana. While the stated purpose of the list was the academic study of the Baha'i Faith, a great majority of the participants were not specialists or college professors. Old-time members of Talisman describe those early days as a time of excitement and wonder. Because of the pattern of Baha'i missionary work, most Baha'is live in small, scattered communities of less than 30 people. While the Baha'i community prides itself on its ethnic diversity, many Talisman participants had never been exposed to such diverse views on Baha'i teachings. Outspoken feminists found themselves corresponding with old-fashioned Middle Eastern men; legalistic

administrators talked to mystics; scriptural literalists went head-to-head with scholars using academic methods.

While Talisman was exciting, it also tended to be contentious, and Baha'is traditionally value "unity" and the harmony of the group. More conservative Baha'is, including those serving on Baha'i institutions, were deeply disturbed by Talisman's rather freewheeling and argumentative atmosphere.

Matters came to a head in late 1995, when David Langness was contacted by the National Spiritual Assembly(NSA)concerning an email he had written to Talisman about the Dialogue episode. He had been the main author of A Modest Proposal and gave vent to the secretive way Baha'i jurisprudence is handled. This post also made the statement that the Universal House of Justice had not approved of the NSAs action in the Dialogue case. The NSA called the statement a lie and insisted that he publicly apologize and retract the statement. (There seems to have been considerable difference between public and private statements on this issue, and I personally believe it to be a matter of confusion rather than dishonesty.)Langness posted a reluctant retraction but it was deemed unsatisfactory by the NSA. He was penalized by the loss of his "administrative rights". This meant that he could not vote, or be elected to a Baha'i institution, or participate in any even that was limited to Baha'is in good standing.

In February 1996, a young member of Majnun (the smaller list continued with its more specialized discussions) was furious at the way the NSA handled the case and suggested that an organized protest be formed along with a written statement of reform proposals for Baha'i administration. Another member of this small circle of friends responded with a humorous message, gentle vetoing the idea as potentially causing more harm than good, and saying that the administration couldn't do anything about the existence of Talisman or the spread of liberal ideas, even though they disliked it. Fatefully, this email was sent to the broader forum, Talisman, instead of to the Majnun list. This message, later dubbed the "Majnun post"was misinterpreted as evidence of a conspiracy and used as an excuse to investigate the prominent posters on the list.

These included John Walbridge and his wife, Linda, Juan Cole, Steven Scholl of White Cloud Press and founding editor of Dialogue magazine, and Anthony Lee of Kalimat Press, an independent Baha'i publisher. Accounts differ concerning the nature and purpose of this investigation. Cole, who had made the most extensive public statements on the crackdown insists that he was threatened with being called a "covenant-breaker" if he did not stop posting his liberal views on email forums. (A covenant-breaker is a heretic who advocates a form of

authority other than the Baha'i institutions. The penalty for this is shunning.) Baha'i officials deny that Cole was ever threatened.

The only written evidence of the nature of the threats made against the Talisman posters are two letters by Counselor Stephen Birkland, the Baha'i official asssigned to the investigation, to Scholl and another Talisman participant.Both of these letters end with the warning that "your promulgation of views contrary to the Teachings was damaging to the Cause. If you were to resume in any fashion this course of action, the effect would be to bring you into direct conflict with the Covenant"; that is, they would be regarded as "covenant-breakers". The letters also make it clear that Birkland's instructions came from the supreme governing body of the Baha'i Faith, with its seat in Haifa.

In the aftermath of Birkland's investigation, Linda Walbridge, Steve Scholl and Juan Cole resigned their Baha'i membership. Walbridge shut down the Talisman list, but Cole, the only one of the five to remain significantly active in cyberspace, started the list up again almost immediately at the University of Michigan. In December 1999, the list, now known as talisman9, moved to eGroups, where it still has over 100 members. Other email forums, including the academic list H-Bahai, and the liberal discussion list Zuhur19, can be regarded as direct descendents of Walbridge's Talisman.

While administrators have been powerless to prevent freedom of expression in Baha'i cyberspace (a phenomenon the Universal House of Justice has called "a campaign of "internal opposition"), it has taken membership away from two others who had become prominent on the later Talisman forums: Canadian fantasy writer Michael McKenny in 1997, and Alison Marshall of New Zealand in 2000.

Author's note: This article first appeared in the online magazine Themestream. It was published on IAMValley April 15, 2001.

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1890, EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWN ARRIVED AT THE MANSION OF BAHJÍ, WHERE HE WOULD STAY FOR FIVE DAYS. DURING HIS VISIT HE INTERVIEWED BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOUR TIMES AND VISITED WITH 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

April 15. On this date in 1890, Edward Granville Brown arrived at the Mansion of Bahjí, where he would stay for five days. During his visit he interviewed Bahá'u'lláh four times and visited with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

From the *Encyclopædia Iranica* article titled BROWNE, EDWARD GRANVILLE...

I. Browne's Life and Academic Career

E. G. Browne came of a wealthy family engaged in shipbuilding. He was at first strongly dominated by his father, Sir Benjamin Browne, who sent him to the preparatory school at Glenalmond, to Eton College, and finally to Cambridge University, where he was to study engineering or, as an ultimate compromise, science and medicine. The boy followed his father's wishes and eventually qualified, and for a short time practiced, as a doctor. But at the age of only fifteen, in 1877, his interest in the Middle East had been aroused by the Russo-Turkish War, in which characteristically his sympathy lay with the side that was unpopular in Britain, the Turks. At this point his "Oriental" studies began, with Turkish, to which Persian and Arabic were soon added. He had (and continued to have) little or no interest in philology as such, and his methods seem to have been entirely pragmatic: the autodidactic use of any manuals and texts he could find, consultation with real and pretended experts, and the genial exploitation of various native speakers, who could nearly always be found in England in the great days of empire. The results, to judge by the reports of his contemporaries and his own published work, were stupendously successful.

Upon his graduation in the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos in 1882, he was "bribed" by his father to persevere in his medical studies with the gift of a summer trip to Istanbul (or, as it was still known in Europe, Constantinople). In 1884, on his own initiative, he also took the so-called "Indian" Languages (in fact, languages of the Islamic world) Tripos at Cambridge. There followed three years of further medical study, internship, and practice, interrupted, whenever the occasion allowed, for pursuit of his private, "Oriental" interests. In 1887 be achieved both his final medical qualifications and a fellowship from his Cambridge college (Pembroke), which

enabled him to spend his celebrated year in Iran—for it was by then unquestionably Persian studies that were claiming his main attention. It was this visit that generated the remarkable book, *A Year Amongst the Persians,* which, despite its romantic and archaic title, approach, and style, remains a classic source. It was first published in 1893, after being more than once turned down, and has since been reprinted several times under various auspices (chiefly A. C. Black and Cambridge University Press).

After his return to Britain in 1888, Browne's life was spent almost wholly in Cambridge, remaining outwardly quite unspectacular. He was first University Lecturer in Persian and then, from 1902 until his death, Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic; the latter post was one of two prestigious but ill-paid chairs nominally in the field of Arabic studies then maintained in the university. Until 1906 he lived a vigorous, if somewhat self-centered, social life as a bachelor in his college; in that year he married Alice Blackburne-Daniell, a well-to-do and influential Roman Catholic, who enlisted his vague but generous sympathies both for Roman Catholicism and for the cause of an independent Ireland. They had two sons, neither of whom followed his father's interests, though later both lent them moral and financial support. Browne suffered a massive heart attack in November, 1924; his wife died in June, 1925, six months before his own death. The last year or so of his life was little more than a gallant holding action.

To appreciate Browne's remarkable academic achievements (as well as some of his peculiar shortcomings) at their proper evaluation, it is necessary to understand something of his personal position and the world in which he lived and worked. He was bred to wealth and status and was (particularly in his mature years) a very rich man in his own right. This meant that his time was largely his own (his statutory duties were minimal) and that he could please himself in virtually everything he did and said. He could choose his own projects, pay for them and their publication if necessary (as it often was), and personally employ such colleagues and helpers (several Iranians among them) as the university would not hire. But this situation carried its disadvantage as well. If he was generous and clever and often charming, he was also egotistical (several tributes bear witness to his fascinating but nearly always one-sided discourse); and, as frequently happens in such cases, his judgment could be willful and erratic and the self-discipline necessary for the finest academic work very difficult to achieve. His almost continuous antagonism to his own government and the establishment (related to general Middle Eastern diplomacy and the Persian "Question," Ireland, South Africa—liberals in those days were pro-Boer—anti-Germanism and concomitant pro-Russian and pro-French policy, inadequate educational measures, and so on) largely does him credit, no doubt; it certainly cost him deserved public recognition and influence. It also, however, sometimes contained elements of the arbitrary and the cranky, and

anyone less privileged might well have had cause to be more circumspect. As with most of his contemporaries, all his ways seem to have been firmly set before he reached the age of thirty. He had, too, something in him of upper-class Victorian-Edwardian philistinism: Early in life he engaged in tennis, squash, and rowing, and later he took up fishing, but he had no time for art, music, religion, or indeed for languages or cultures outside his chosen field. His early enthusiasm for Turkish studies soon waned, while for "Indian" culture he seemed to cherish a marked antipathy most of his life, considering it to represent a debased version of all that he loved in Iran. He was no sybarite: Given endless cigarettes and tea, he could apparently easily dispense (for himself and his guests) with good food or wine.

Browne's work in promoting Persian studies was epoch-making, for it must be remembered that in his lifetime (and sometimes still) Islamic studies were conceived, as the title of his chair suggests, primarily in terms of Arabic. His long-time friend, colleague, and successor R. A. Nicholson, a Persianist of almost equal note, included in his introduction to posthumous *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS belonging to the late E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1932) a memoir and almost complete classified bibliography of fifty-five major items that Browne had published. Although these works cannot all be listed here, some of the largest or most important demand comment.

First, unquestionably, is the monumental *Literary History of Persia,* the four volumes of which appeared in 1902, 1906, 1920, and 1924. It is a work that fully displays Browne's strengths and weaknesses: broad in scope (and ranging far beyond literature as such), dense with nearly always accurate detail, and based almost entirely on original sources (many of which were at that time accessible only to Browne himself) but also diffuse and at times irrelevant (volume I, for example, consists largely of prolegomena, though originally intended to comprise the entire work). It also abounds in examples of Browne's and his society's prejudices, as well as reflecting some unfortunate Iranian cultural attitudes of the time (volume IV, for example, though packed with valuable material, does scant justice to the literature, art, and general high culture of the whole period 1500-1900). Volumes II and III, though now dated in information and approach and selective in interest, are fine pieces of work. The copyright to the whole enterprise, which initially had a checkered publishing history, has long been vested in Cambridge University Press, and reprints have been frequent.

Two of Browne's special concerns gave rise to a considerable number of publications from about 1890 to 1920. These concerns were respectively Babism/Bahaism and what he perceived to be the rise of true liberal democracy in Iran (see ii and iii below, with bibliographies). He also edited, translated, and encouraged others to work on a number of important classical texts that

had come to his notice during the preparation of his Literary History. Among the most important of his own contributions are editions of *Tadhkiratuʾsh-Shuʿará* of Dawlatšāh (1901), *Lubábu'l-Albáb* of ʿAwfī (with Mīrzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī; 2 vols., 1903, 1906), and in the Gibb Memorial Series *An Abridged Translation of the History of Ṭabaristán* of Ebn Esfandīār (1905), *Taʾríkh-i-Guzīda* of Mostawfī (2 vols., 1910, 1913), and the revised translation of *Čahār maqāla* of Neẓāmī ʿArūżī (*Cahár Maqála,* 1921). Browne's own interest in such works was not always strictly literary, but his use of them was to prove in the long run most fortunate, for they include fine and often rare examples of medieval Persian prose. One anomalous work, *Arabian Medicine* (1921), the publication of his Fitzpatrick lectures before the Royal College of Physicians, represents a marriage of his enforced earlier studies with his own chosen field of endeavor.

Much of Browne's time and phenomenal energy were channeled into helping individuals and causes or carrying out "chores." He gave personal (including financial) assistance to a great variety of students and to Iranian and other émigrés. His role on the Persia Committee, which endeavored for some years (particularly between 1908 and 1912) to influence the British government and public opinion, was crucial—though the ultimate results were disappointing (see iii below). It did, however, win him high regard in Iran, in addition to the respect he already enjoyed among educated Iranians for his dedicated scholarship. He promoted "Oriental" studies at Cambridge in various ways, especially by encouraging academic training for candidates in the Levant Consular Service and the Egyptian, Sudanese, and Indian civil services. Many academic or quasi-academic figures emerged from this unofficial nursery of talent, among them the late Sir Reader Bullard, Laurence Lockhart, and Sir Ronald Storrs. After the early death of the Turcologist E. J. W. Gibb in 1901, Browne took responsibility for putting a large part of Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry* into final form and seeing it through the press. He was the leading executive and academic figure in publishing the invaluable Gibb Memorial Series, from a fund established by Gibb's family in 1904. Finally, it should be mentioned that he did a great deal of cataloguing work on the rich Islamic collections housed in Cambridge, which culminated in his *Handlist of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1900); a supplementary list published in 1922 also included manuscripts located in the individual colleges.

Mention has already been made of the significant failure of British (and indeed foreign) public and academic authorities to honor Browne as fully as might have been expected in the light of his achievements. The following list includes virtually all the significant marks of recognition that came his way: 1903, Fellow of the British Academy; 1911, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; 1922, Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society; 1921, on his fifty-ninth birthday,

an address and presentations from admirers in Iran (where he was also made a member of the Order of the Lion and the Sun); on his sixtieth birthday a festschrift entitled *A Volume of Oriental Essays Presented to E. G. Browne* . . . (ed. Sir T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1922) but nicknamed *ʿAjab-nāma* (Book of wonders), as a play on his initials. (Typically, this book drew a sour review or two, which, though aimed at the mediocre quality of some of the articles, must inevitably have spoiled Browne's pleasure in the gesture.) Also on this occasion Browne received further letters and addresses from Iran and a number of Western countries. Ironically, his death gave rise to a host of notices conferring upon him the most extravagant praises.

ii. Browne on Babism and Bahaism

Browne first developed an intense curiosity about Babism when he read Gobineau's account in the summer of 1886, and one of his pursuits during his subsequent year-long sojourn in Iran (1887-88) was making contact with the Babis and gaining access to their manuscripts. Browne deeply admired the heroism of the Babis in the revolutionary period 1848-52, found a "sublime beauty" even in the Bab's more ungrammatical writings, and was impressed by Gobineau's account of the Babi leader Ṣobḥ-e Azal. He was thus rather taken aback to discover, upon making contact with "Babis" in Iran, that almost all had become Bahais, followers of Azal's older half-brother Bahāʾ-Allāh, who had replaced the *Bayān* with the *Aqdas* (Browne, 1889, pp. 486-87, 901, 933; idem, 1893, repr. 1926, pp. 328-29).

In true nineteenth-century style, Browne was after the pristine origins of the movement, considering later developments to be departures. He thus considered the Azalīs more reliable than the Bahais in putting him in touch with the Babi past and regretted the rivalry between the two groups. He seems early on to have taken the Azalī side in the struggle; when Iranian Bahais reproached him for inclining to Azal, he did not deny it and blamed Bahai violence toward Azalīs (1893, repr. 1926, pp. 578-79). In his 1889 papers for the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* he set out for the first time in English a detailed account of the evolution of Babism and the rise of Bahaism after 1850. He entered into frequent correspondence with Azal and his followers and in the spring of 1890 voyaged to Cyprus, where he spent two weeks with Azal, then to ʿAkkā (Acre), where he spent a week with the Bahais.

Among Browne's Azalī contacts in Istanbul was Shaikh Aḥmad Rūḥī, who told him late in 1890 about a manuscript entitled *Hašt behest*, a polemic against Bahaism. Although this book had just been written by Rūḥī himself and Āqā Khan Kermānī, both sons-in-law of Azal, Rūḥī misrepresented it as the work of Āqā Javād Karbalāʾī, an eyewitness to events of early Babism.

Karbalāʾī had become a Bahai, but Rūḥī told Browne that he had been an Azalī. Browne was at first excited by Hašt behešt, wrongly considering it a primary source for early Babi history and a vindication of Azal's right to head Babism after the Bab's death (1892, pp. 680-84, reporting Rūḥī's correspondence); he much later came to realize the true authorship of *Hašt behest* (idem, 1932, p. 76, para. 1; for more recent scholarship on this work and on Kermānī, see Bayat, pp. 160-61).

At ʿAkkā Browne had acquired a copy of the account of Babi and Bahai history by Bahāʾ-Allāh's son ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, which he published with a translation and extensive annotation, as *A Traveller's Narrative* in 1891. Browne spoke highly of Bahāʾ-Allāh and ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ in his introduction to this work, but the notes (II, pp. 356-73), written later, show a willingness to believe charges that Bahāʾ-Allāh had ordered some of his enemies assassinated; this later attitude was much influenced by the anti-Bahai calumnies of *Hašt-behešt*.

In 1893 Browne published an English translation of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Hamadānī's *Tārīḵ-ejadīd,* a late pro-Bahai account of the Babi period. Again his notes to this work betray an implicit belief that even late Azalī accounts of Babi history are somehow more authentic than Bahai accounts, whereas in fact both represent evolution away from the original ideas of pristine Babism. But Browne's interest in this subject was fading, and he turned later in the 1890s to his literary history of Iran, to which he devoted the rest of his life. His enthusiasm for the study of Babism waned for several reasons. An Oxford Magazine review (25 May 1892, p. 394) attacking his work on this topic as a waste of time stung him deeply. In addition, the constant polemics between Azalīs and Bahais pained him, as did those between partisans of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ and those of his brothers after Bahāʾ-Allāh's death.

When Browne became caught up in the Constitutional Revolution in 1905-11, he showed some peripheral interest in whether or not the small minority of Azalī's and Bahais were participants. He concluded, however, that the Bahais, with their emphasis on world unity, were too cosmopolitan to be good nationalists, and he thought Iran needed nationalists at that point (Browne, 1910, pp. 424-29). In 1910 he published, at the urging and with the cooperation of the Shiʿite scholar Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Qazvīnī, the manuscript of *Ketāb-e noqṭat al-kāf*, which they attributed to Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī, an early Babi who had perished in 1852. Qazvīnī wrote the Persian introduction, and Browne wrote an English preface, in which he attacked the Bahais for attempting to rewrite history (in *Tārīḵ-ejadīd*) in order to lessen the importance of the Bab in favor of Bahāʾ-Allah and accused them of suppressing *Noqṭat al-kāf*. Although it is true that this manuscript probably circulated infrequently among Bahais, the many copies of it in Bahai collections in Iran and in Haifa demonstrate that they hardly suppressed it. Furthermore, some

material and attitudes expressed in *Noqṭat al-kāf* certainly postdate 1852. The work should probably be recognized, therefore, not as the "original" history, which the *Tārīk̲-ejadīd* was meant to supplant, but as an alternative tradition about early Babism, containing primary material but redacted from an Azalī point of view before the final break between Azal and Bahāʾ-Allāh. Mīrzā Abu'l-Fażl Golpāyegānī and other Bahai scholars replied to Browne that they had seen Ḥājī Mīrzā Jānī's early chronicle of Babism and that *Noqṭat al-kāf* was not it. A number of Azalīs and Bahais wrote or published important memoirs or chronicles in response to this publication of *Noqṭat al-kāf*; Browne deposited those sent to him in his collection but wrote nothing about them (Balyuzi, pp. 70, 72-73; Browne Coll., Cambridge University, F. 57[9] "Resāla-ye Sayyed Mehdī Dahajī"; Mīrzā Abu'l-Fażl Golpāyegānī and Mehdī Golpāyegānī, *Kašf al-ḡeṭāʾ,* Tashkent, 1919).

Browne's last substantial work on Babism was the publication of a miscellany of essentially unedited materials, some of them translations, entitled *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (1918). He also included a few specimens of Babi and Bahai poetry in the fourth volume of his *Literary History of Persia* (1924) and remarked favorably on the crisp style of Bahāʾ-Allāh's *Ketāb-e īqān*. His obituary of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, written in 1921, was, in contrast to the rather tense communications of a decade earlier, warm and appreciative and showed admiration for his promotion of racial unity in the segregated United States.

iii. Browne and the Persian Constitutional Movement

E. G. Browne was incomparably more sympathetic and devoted to the Persian Constitutional movement than was any other European. Through his numerous publications, his lectures, and the letters he published in daily newspapers, he took an active part in organizing and influencing British opinion. The Persia Committee, founded in October, 1908, by Browne and H. F. B. Lynch and composed of prominent members of both houses of Parliament, as well as writers and journalists, functioned as an active and influential pressure group both inside and outside England.

Browne's deep interest in politics had begun in the early years of his life. His admiration for the Turks in their losing struggle against Russia in the war of 1877-78 first attracted his attention to the East. It was this political commitment to weaker nations struggling against political and military penetration by the European powers that led him to begin learning Turkish, followed by Arabic and Persian, and thus laid the foundations for his brilliant academic career (see i above). Nevertheless, Persia soon supplanted Turkey as the focus of his interest and came to dominate not only his scholarly but also his political activities. He admired the "stability of national type,

and power of national recovery" of Persia throughout its long history and was fascinated by such ideals as the "interdependence of all mankind" and the "obligation of tolerance towards those of other religions" that he discovered in the classical Persian epics (Browne, 1917-18, pp. 312, 313).

His own profound and humane yearning for a "universal brotherhood of mankind" (Nicholson, p. viii) corresponded to the basic principles of the Babi and Bahai religions (see ii above). It was this same deep-rooted humanitarianism, rather than any reasoned theory of nationalism, that led Browne to identify himself with popular movements striving for liberty. Independent in forming his views and fearless in expressing them, he generally found himself in opposition to the official policy of his government (see i above). His belief in a plurality of nations, each preserving its distinctive character, all coexisting freely and aiding one another, was decisive in his special dedication to the Persian cause. His manifold writings on the Constitutional movement, as well as his publication of its authentic documents, were aimed at arousing sympathy for the Persian reformers (Browne, 1909, p. 5). He asserted the Persians' right of self-determination (1917-18, p. 320) and consistently deplored the means employed by England and Russia to crush the movement, especially revealing the atrocities committed by the Russians in Persia (1912a, pp. 6, 15; 1912b). A vehement opponent of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which had established Russian and British zones of influence in Persia, Browne demanded complete abolition of these zones (1917-18, p. 329), comparing partition of Persia with that of Poland (1912a, p. 17). He perceived the Constitutional movement as essentially a nationalist, rather than a democratic (1917-18, p. 323), cause, and the Persians thus fighting for their very existence as a nation (1910, p. xix).

Browne was able to obtain valuable information for his publications from the best sources available. He was not only acquainted with Jamāl-al-Dīn Afḡānī and Mīrzā Malkom Khan but also knew many of the national leaders who had been exiled to France and England after the bombardment of Parliament by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah in 1908, among whom Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, ʿAlī-Akbar Dehḵodā, and Moḥammad-ʿAlī Tarbīat were the most prominent. Browne was also kept well informed by correspondents in St. Petersburg and some of his former students who had entered the British consular service.

The events in Persia were of such importance to Browne that he even discontinued work on his monumental *Literary History of Persia*, the second volume of which had just been published (1906), in order to dedicate himself fully to organizing support and assistance. Indignant with the manner in which the British foreign minister, Edward Grey, was conducting affairs in Iran, the Persia Committee, with Browne as its vice-chairman, published resolutions, staged large

public meetings, and pressed for Russian withdrawal from Persia. By 1911 the executive committee consisted of forty-six members, among them thirty-three Radical members of Parliament, who subjected the House of Commons to sustained debates on Persian affairs. During 1911-12 Persia was the central issue in a general "Grey must go" campaign. To all such activities pamphlets published by Browne were fundamental.

In addition to his political work, Browne did not neglect the literary aspects of the Constitutional movement, which were attractively presented in *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*. This account of the flourishing of a free press, as well as the large quantity of excellent patriotic and political verse included, was aimed at counterbalancing the "reactionary and obscurantist policy" of *The Times*, which had criticized the "mischievous and dangerous" character of the free press in Iran (Browne, 1914, p. xii), and at refuting those who sought for political reasons to represent the Persians as decadent and incapable of governing themselves (Browne, 1910, p. xii; idem, 1914, p. xv; idem, 1909, p. 6). In particular, he emphasized the work of the secret and semisecret societies (*anjomans*) established during the revolutionary period, which provided free education in night schools, arranged for medical treatment, and organized lectures on the duties of citizenship (1909, pp. 13, 21; 1910, pp. 244-46).

Browne was held in the highest esteem by Persians. Although he had at first been disliked in Iran because of his sympathies for the persecuted Babis, he soon evoked gratitude for having taken Persia and its literature as his own and for supporting the Persian people as few others had done. To all Persians living in exile he was of infinite help and utmost generosity. When Tabrīz was occupied by the Russians in 1911, the Constitutionalists sent telegrams asking for his assistance. As for his services to Persian literature, a contemporary Persian newspaper article compared them to the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd's patronage of Ferdowsī (quoted by E. D. Ross in his introduction to the 1926 edition of Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*, pp. xix-xx). Browne was awarded the Persian order of the Lion and the Sun, and on his sixtieth birthday he received Persian representatives who presented him with a moving illuminated address from his admirers in Iran (Arberry, p. 189). Persians today still remember Browne as one of the great men devoted to their country and its people.

Comments

APRIL 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1945, SHOGHI EFFENDI SENT A CABLEGRAM ANNOUNCING "FAITHLESS BROTHER HUSAYN, AFTER LONG PERIOD OF DISHONOURABLE CONDUCT, HAS ABANDONED THE MASTER'S HOME TO CONSORT WITH HIS SISTER AND OTHER COVENANT-BREAKERS." SHOGHI EFFENDI WOULD LATER CHIDE HUSAYN FOR MARRYING A ...

April 15. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram announcing "Faithless brother Husayn, after long period of dishonourable conduct, has abandoned the Master's home to consort with his sister and other Covenant-breakers." Shoghi Effendi would later chide Husayn for marrying a "lowborn Christian girl."

In March 1950, Shoghi Effendi would send a further cable: "Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period (of) years followed by association with Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land and efforts (to) undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with **lowborn Christian girl** (in) Europe." Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl" as follows: "Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note that the terms 'low-born Christian girl ' and 'disgraceful alliance' should arouse any question; it seems to him that the friends should realize it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master, and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all."

Comments

APRIL 16. ON THIS DATE IN 2000, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF BRAZIL IN REPLY TO "A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS REGARDING RESIGNATION AND MEMBERSHIP ON REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS."

April 16. On this date in 2000, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil in reply to "a number of questions regarding resignation and membership on Regional Bahá'í Councils."

Comments

APRIL 16. ON THIS DATE IN 1925, PALLE BISCHOFF WAS BORN. HE WAS THE FIRST DANISH BAHÁ'Í TO BECOME A BAHA'I IN DENMARK AND THE FIRST BAHÁ'Í TO PIONEER TO GREENLAND. HE ALSO SERVED ON THE NSA OF SCANDINAVIA AND FINLAND AS VICE-CHAIR AND THE NSA OF DENMARK.

April 16. On this date in 1925, Palle Bischoff was born. He was the first Danish Bahá'í to become a Baha'i in Denmark and the first Bahá'í to pioneer to Greenland. He also served on the NSA of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair and the NSA of Denmark.

Palle Bischoff was born in Humlebaek, Denmark in 1925. He studied commercial science and obtained a degree in the field. He became a Bahá'í on November 17, 1947, and attended a Feast in Stockholm shortly after his conversion. In 1950 he chaired an evening at the Third European Teaching Conference in Copenhagen, and delivered a talk on Progressive Revelation.

In 1951 Palle was appointed to manage a fishing station at Edgesminde, Greenland for four months and another station in Govkussak in the winter by the Danish government, allowing him to become the first Bahá'í to pioneer to the country. He wrote the following to the Greenland Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada:

> "It is exciting and I pray that I will be able to light the fire of the love of God among the people there so that the unity and harmony of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will be manifested also in that country"

He opened a ski school after retiring from managing the fishing stations, and lived in Greenland until 1954, when he returned to Denmark.

He served as Chairman of the 1956 Bahá'í Summer School of Moss, Norway. In 1957 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Scandinavia and Finland as Vice-Chair, and he served on that Assembly until 1963. In 1961 he was elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Frederiksberg in Denmark.

In 1964 he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Denmark, and he served on the Assembly, or as an Auxiliary Board Member, until 2000. He was also elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Sollerod in 1964 and served on it until 1998.

The Universal House of Justice noted his "outstanding services" that "earned him an imperishable place in the annals of the Danish Bahá'í community" after his death.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum referenced Palle Bischoff in a letter dated October 30, 1951, written to the NSA of Canada "The departure of Mr. Bond for the Arctic made the Guardian very happy; this, as well as the sailing of Mr. Bischoff for Greenland, mark the opening stage of the campaign to carry the Faith to the Eskimos, a plan set forth by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and very dear to His heart."

> October 30, 1951.
>
> National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.
>
> Your letters ... have been received, with enclosures, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.
>
> The Administrative Order is not a governmental or civic body, it is to regulate and guide the internal affairs of the Bahá'í community; consequently it works, according to its own procedure, best suited to its needs. A Bahá'í who does more than visit temporarily a community is considered for our administrative purposes as a resident and can vote and serve accordingly. Students in foreign lands, most obviously not residents, are registered as local Bahá'ís, and therefore entitled to do their share of work and play their part in the local community life. This should be pointed out to ... who seem to be confusing our internal administration with external practices which have no relation to it. As regards their personal attitudes the Guardian, remembering what a devoted worker ... has been in the past, is very sorry to see she is no longer active. He does not feel this will lead to either her happiness or that of ...; for, whenever we compromise with what is noblest and best in ourselves, we are the losers invariably.
>
> The Guardian was delighted to hear the friends are at last responding to the urgent needs of the Plan and going forth as pioneers. Plans are concrete things, and not mere honors, and victories--like all other achievements in life--must be purchased at the cost of persistent efforts! He feels sure the Canadian Bahá'ís, perhaps slow to get under way, will display the counterpart of this British characteristic, and cling like bull dogs to their tasks, once they do get under way.
>
> PIONEER TO GREENLAND

The departure of Mr. Bond **1** for the Arctic made the Guardian very happy; this, as well as the sailing of Mr. Bischoff **2** for Greenland, mark the opening stage of the campaign to carry the Faith to the Eskimos, a plan set forth by `Abdu'l-Bahá and very dear to His heart.

Encouraging as these steps are, they do not take care of the main body of the work--the establishment of new Assemblies and groups. In order to accomplish this the entire Canadian Community will have to rise to a new level of activity, consciousness, and sacrifice, just as did the British Bahá'í Community during their Six Year Plan. Their success is perhaps one of the most remarkable ever achieved in the Bahá'í World because they were few in number, run down in health from the long years of suffering during the war, and poor in financial resources. Their determination, dedication and moral stamina, however, carried them through, and Bahá'u'lláh gave them the victory. He will give the same victory to everyone who shows the same characteristics. Success breeds success, and this same Community, now rightfully proud and conscious of its importance, is carrying on its African work in a brilliant manner. The Canadian Bahá'ís, more prosperous, less restricted, and equally capable, can accomplish just as much if they unitedly determine to do so.

The response made by the Canadian friends to the Guardian's appeal for support of the Shrine work has touched him very much. He wishes to thank all those who contributed for their loving generosity, and to assure them that their cooperation in this wonderful task has added to the spiritual beauty of an Edifice already so Holy and so beloved by all the believers the world over.

He wishes you all every success in the discharge of your arduous duties, and is praying for a marked quickening in the pace of the Five Year Plan.

With Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI.

1 Jameson Bond--first pioneer to the Canadian Arctic (District of Keewatin 1950, District of Franklin 1951-63, with Mrs. Gale Bond from 1953 on).

2 Palle Bischoff--Danish believer, the first pioneer to Greenland (1951-54).

Comments

APRIL 16. ON THIS DATE IN 1967, THE UHJ WROTE "IT IS NECESSARY THAT BAHÁ'ÍS WHO INTEND TO DIVORCE BE AWARE THAT THEY MUST CONSULT WITH THEIR LOCAL OR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THAT BASICALLY A YEAR OF WAITING MUST ENSUE BEFORE DIVORCE CAN BE EFFECTED, AND THAT THE ASSEMBLY HAS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES..."

April 16. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote "it is necessary that Bahá'ís who intend to divorce be aware that they must consult with their Local or National Assembly, that basically a year of waiting must ensue before divorce can be effected, and that the Assembly has certain responsibilities toward the couple concerned about which they will be informed through consultation with the Assembly."

> 1317. Bahá'ís Who Intend to Divorce Must Consult with Local or National Assembly
>
> "However, it is necessary that Bahá'ís who intend to divorce be aware that they must consult with their Local or National Assembly, that basically a year of waiting must ensue before divorce can be effected, and that the Assembly has certain responsibilities toward the couple concerned about which they will be informed through consultation with the Assembly."
>
> (From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 16, 1967)

Comments

APRIL 16. ON THIS DATE IN 2002, AN ARTICLE TITLED "BAHAI FEEL BASHED BY LOCAL MEDIA" APPEARED IN HAARETZ NOTING "ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL PRESS ACCUSING THE BAHAI WORLD CENTER OF RECEIVING GOVERNMENT TAX REIMBURSEMENTS WHICH IT IS NOT ENTITLED TO, OF HAVING UNETHICAL...."

April 16. On this date in 2002, an article titled "Bahai feel bashed by local media" appeared in Haaretz noting "Articles have appeared in the local and national press accusing the Bahai World Center of receiving government tax reimbursements which it is not entitled to, of having unethical links with the Labor Party, of using excessive amounts of water to maintain the gardens."

> Bahai feel bashed by local media
>
> By Charlotte Halle
>
> The Bahai movement, which plowed $250 million into re-landscaping the gardens of its Haifa world headquarters, charges that it has been unfairly treated by the local media.
>
> Articles have appeared in the local and national press accusing the Bahai World Center of receiving government tax reimbursements which it is not entitled to, of having unethical links with the Labor Party, of using excessive amounts of water to maintain the gardens and, most absurdly, of worshiping idols and using incense during religious practices.
>
> Officials are particularly furious about an "untrue and unfair" article that appeared in the Haifa weekly newspaper Zman Haifa earlier this month, which claimed that the world center had received millions of shekels in irregular payments from the Israeli government. The Bahais are particularly distressed because they say the newspaper gave them just one hour to respond to the allegations before the article went to press.
>
> "It upsets us that people look for an ulterior, negative motive in what we are doing," says Glen Fullmer, senior information officer at the center. He attributes the attacks

to the Bahai community's dramatic shift from "obscurity" to "high-profile" target for media coverage following the opening of the new garden project.

"We were silent citizens," he says, "and sometimes the story we have to tell - that we are beautifying our holy places with voluntary contributions from Bahais around the world on a nonprofit basis - just doesn't seem to add up."

Based on an acceptance of all world religions, the Bahai faith supports the unification of humanity and the emergence of a global civilization. Its principles forbid accepting donations from any individual or institution outside of the faith.

The opening of the gardens surrounding the world-famous golden-domed Shrine of the Bab - a tranquil haven for visiting pilgrims - is the result of 15 years of planning and construction, and a $250-million investment by the Bahai community. The center signed an agreement with the Israeli government in 1987, entitling it to tax exemptions on the basis of the fact that it is an international religious, nonprofit organization. The center stands to receive a tax refund on the order of $20 million.

The Zman Haifa article was based on questions about tax reimbursement that were submitted by an independent auditor to the Ministry of Tourism.

Bahai sources claim that all the auditor's queries were satisfactorily answered, and that it was "defamatory" and unfair of the newspaper to portray the questions as based in fact. Furthermore, the world center placed a full-page advertisement in the newspaper a week later, refuting the paper's claims with quotes from Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Finance officials. The Bahai center is still considering taking legal action against the newspaper for the "malicious and unprofessional" article.

Zman Haifa editor Sharon Gal told Anglo File that reporters had given the Bahais about seven hours to repond to the claims. Due to a "technical error," their response to the allegations had not appeared, but added that a response was printed in full the following week, the same week the full-page advertisement was published. He added that many editors would not have agreed to print the advertisement of the Bahais because it was so overtly critical of the newspaper.

Murray Smith, deputy secretary-general of the Bahai World Center, says the gardens have given a "big boost" to the social and economic life of Haifa, with almost 35,000 Israelis visiting the site every week since June. This represents a radical rise

in the number of day visitors to the city, at a time when tourism is at an all-time low. He emphasized that entrance to the gardens is free and that they are open daily.

The opening of the gardens, Smith adds, has forced the Bahais into the "limelight," although they prefer to keep a low profile, to avoid "upsetting people in a way that will be of negative consequence to Bahais in other countries."

Smith dismisses as "completely false and erroneous" the claims in the media that the Bahais worship idols and use incense. He also outlined the world center's strict regulations - built into the planning of the gardens - stipulating avoidance of water-intensive plants, and use of state-of-the-art irrigation technology. He adds that many "positive" articles also appeared in the press following the opening of the gardens.

In general, says Smith, the Bahai center has enjoyed good relations with all Israeli governments, a fact that has not escaped the attention of the government of Iran. There, Bahai believers are persecuted under the fundamentalist Islamic regime, which accuses them of being Zionist collaborators. Baha'u'llah, the founder of the monotheistic Bahai faith - which broke off from Islam 150 years ago - arrived in the Holy Land from Iran as a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire in 1868 and died near Acre in 1892. According to Smith, when the Bahais arrived in Palestine, Baha'u'llah instructed his followers that they must not seek or accept converts here, a rule which is still strictly observed today.

The elected governing body of the world's Bahai community, the Universal House of Justice, has its seat in Haifa on Mount Carmel, adjacent to the Shrine of the Bab and the new gardens. Haifa and Acre together comprise the international spiritual and administrative center for the five million followers of the Bahai faith, of whom 800 live in Israel, volunteering for a time at the Haifa headquarters before returning home.

The sentiments in the article are reflected in the 2007 Israeli documentary film "Bahais in My Backyard" which includes interviews with Murray R. Smith (at 9 minutes 20 seconds), Moshe Sharon (at 12 minutes and 10 seconds), Nigar Bahai Amsalem (at 13 minutes 50 seconds), and Frederick Glaysher (at 40 minutes)

Moshe Sharon serves as Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he serves as Chair in Bahá'í Studies. In the interview he states that the only Bahá'í academic chair in the world is in Israel due to his efforts in convincing

Hebrew University to establish one and his efforts in finding a benefactor to fund the position. Even at the time of the interview, there were other Bahá'í academic chairs in existence, such as the ones established at Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, a state university in Madhya Pradesh, in 1991 and at the University of Maryland in 1993.

Moshe Sharon denies the existence of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants in Israel. Despite Sharon's denial of the existence of such relatives, they do exist, and one of Bahá'u'lláh's great-granddaughters, Nigar Bahai Amsalem, is featured in the film. The denial of these descendants, no less by a purported academic who is "Chair of Bahá'í Studies" at arguably Israel's best university, is curious.

Frequently interviewed by Israeli media, Moshe Sharon has been called "Israel's greatest Middle East scholar". Among his political views is that there is "no possibility of peace between Israel and the Palestinians whatsoever, for ever" and that peace agreements with Arabs are "pieces of paper, parts of tactics, strategies...with no meaning." He blames the Bosnians' being Muslim for the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990's and argues that "The only way to avoid military confrontation with Iran is to leave this military confrontation to powers bigger than Israel."

Who are Bahá'u'lláh's descendants? They are a varied group of people. Some, such as Nigar Bahai Amsalem, have married Israeli Jews. Shoghi Effendi's brother Husayn married someone Shoghi Effendi would describe as a "lowborn Christian girl." Others have married Indians. Still others have married Arabs. In fact, Munib Shahid, Shoghi Effendi's cousin through `Abdu'l-Bahá's daughter Ruha, married Serene Husseini Shahid, and their daughter, Leila Shahid is a prominent Palestinian diplomat currently serving as General Delegate of Palestine to the European Union. She is frequently interviewed, particularly by francophone media,. Although Munib Shahid made trips abroad to promote the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi would declare Munib Shahid a Covenant-breaker with the the following cable to the Bahá'í world in November 1944:

> Monib Shahid, grandson of both `Abdu'l-Bahá and the King of Martyrs, married according to the Moslem rites the daughter of a political exile who is nephew of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. This treacherous act of alliance with enemies of the Faith merits condemnation of entire Bahá'í world." Bahá'í News, No. 172

In March 1950, Shoghi Effendi would send a cable: "Faithless brother Hussein, already abased through dishonorable conduct over period (of) years followed by association with Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land and efforts (to) undermine Guardian's position, recently further demeaned himself through marriage under obscure circumstances with **lowborn Christian girl**

(in) Europe." Shoghi Effendi would later defend the use of the term "lowborn Christian girl" as follows: "Regarding his cable concerning Hussein: he has been very surprised to note that the terms 'low-born Christian girl ' and 'disgraceful alliance' should arouse any question; it seems to him that the friends should realize it is not befitting for the Guardian's own brother, the grandchild of the Master, an Afnán and Aghsán mentioned in the Will and Testament of the Master, and of whom so much was expected because of his relation to the family of the Prophet, to marry an unknown girl, according to goodness knows what rite, who is not a believer at all."

Comments

APRIL 16. ON THIS DATE IN 1981, THE UHJ WROTE "THE FIRST TEACHER WHO WAS CARELESS OF CONSOLIDATION, INSTEAD OF PLANTING AND NOURISHING THE SEEDS OF FAITH HAS, IN FACT, "INOCULATED" THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE DIVINE MESSAGE AND MADE SUBSEQUENT TEACHING VERY MUCH HARDER."

April 16. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote "In such countries it is comparatively easy to bring large numbers of new believers into the Faith, and this is such a thrilling experience that visiting teachers often tend to prefer to do this rather than help with the consolidation work ... The first teacher who was careless of consolidation, instead of planting and nourishing the seeds of faith has, in fact, "inoculated" the people against the Divine Message and made subsequent teaching very much harder."

> "The ... problem occurs most frequently in countries such as those in Africa, where there is entry by troops. In such countries it is comparatively easy to bring large numbers of new believers into the Faith, and this is such a thrilling experience that visiting teachers often tend to prefer to do this rather than help with the consolidation work ... It should be pointed out that, especially if they [the travelling teachers] are assigned to expansion work, they must remember that consolidation is an essential and inseparable element of teaching, and if they go to a remote area and enroll believers whom no one is going to be able to visit again in the near future, they may well be doing a disservice to those people and to the Faith. To give people this glorious Message and then leave them in the lurch, produces disappointment and disillusionment, so that, when it does become possible to carry out properly planned teaching in that area, the teachers may well find the people resistant to the Message. The first teacher who was careless of consolidation, instead of planting and nourishing the seeds of faith has, in fact, "inoculated" the people against the Divine Message and made subsequent teaching very much harder." (16 April 1981, Universal House of Justice. In Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-1986, p. 483; and Seven Year Plan, p. 165) [34]

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 2000, THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHA'IS OF THE UK ANNOUNCED "THE THEFT OF THE EAGLE FROM THE TOP OF THE MONUMENT TO SHOGHI EFFENDI IN THE NEW SOUTHGATE CEMETERY."

April 17. On this date in 2000, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK announced "the theft of the eagle from the top of the monument to Shoghi Effendi in the New Southgate Cemetery" noting "noting "It is clear that this was not an act of vandalism or of religious desecration, since no other damage was caused and the eagle has been removed altogether from the cemetery."

Theft of the Eagle from the Guardian's Resting Place To friends who have written about the theft of the eagle from the Guardian's Resting Place

Dearly loved friends Please forgive this general response to those who have been moved to write to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom about the shocking theft of the eagle from the monument to Shoghi Effendi in the New Southgate Cemetery in London. There are too many for a personal response to each one. For those who wish to confirm the authenticity of the announcement, the following was posted on the United Kingdom National Assembly's e-mailing list NEWS:

7 April 2000

Dear Baha'i friends

It is with regret that we report the theft of the eagle from the top of the monument to Shoghi Effendi in the New Southgate Cemetery. The theft appears to have happened last night and in removing the eagle the thieves caused the stone globe on which the eagle perched to fall to the ground. Some minor damage has been caused to the marble plinth on which the column stands and to one or two of the flower beds.

It is clear that this was not an act of vandalism or of religious desecration, since no other damage was caused and the eagle has been removed altogether from the cemetery.

The National Spiritual Assembly has reported the matter to the police, to the cemetery authorities and to the Universal House of Justice. We will continue to monitor the situation and necessary repairs and restitution will be put in hand.

With loving Baha'i greetings

Barney Leith, Secretary National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PD, UK

The National Spiritual Assembly is in receipt of guidance from the Universal House of Justice about how to make good the damage that was done and about increased security measures. The Baha'i World Centre is taking responsibility for the replacement of the eagle, should the original not be found. We are deeply grateful to those friends who have offered to contribute to the replacement of the eagle or even to sculpt a new one. However, in caring for the Guardian's Resting Place the National Assembly is acting as an agent for the Universal House of Justice, which has the ultimate responsibility for decisions relating to this Holy Place. We anxiously await the guidance of the House of Justice.

With loving Baha'i greetings

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK Barney Leith, Secretary

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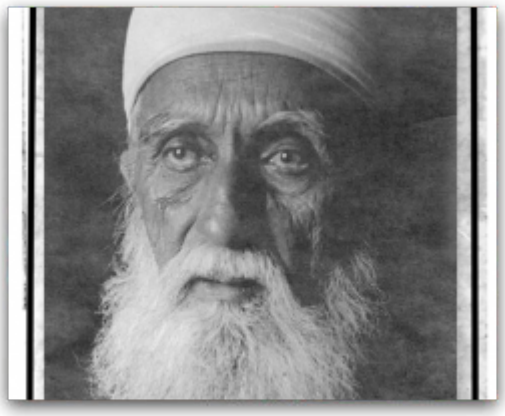
Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, A HEADLINE IN THE "PITTSBURG TIMES" READ "HEAD OF A NEW CULT," INTRODUCING 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ. "THE VENERABLE PERSIAN IS THE HEAD OF THE NEW BAHÁ'Í RELIGION, HAVING MORE THAN 20,000,000 FOLLOWERS. THE BELIEF EMBRACES THE DOCTRINE OF WORLD-WIDE PEACE AND UNITY OF RELIGION.

April 17. On this date in 1912, a headline in the "Pittsburg Times" read "Head of a New Cult," introducing 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "The venerable Persian is the head of the new Bahá'í religion, having more than 20,000,000 followers. The belief embraces the doctrine of world-wide peace and unity of religion."



Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "WHAT CAN CONTROL YOUTH AND SAVE IT FROM THE PITFALLS OF THE CRASS MATERIALISM OF THE AGE IS THE POWER OF A GENUINE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND LIVING FAITH SUCH AS THE ONE REVEALED TO THE WORLD BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH...BUT WHEN TRUE RELIGION IS COMBINED ...."

April 17. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "What can control youth and save it from the pitfalls of the crass materialism of the age is the power of a genuine, constructive and living Faith such as the one revealed to the world by Bahá'u'lláh...But when true religion is combined with true ethics, then moral progress becomes a possibility and not a mere ideal."

> 2263. What can control youth and save it from the pitfalls of the crass materialism of the age is the power of a genuine, constructive and living Faith such as the one revealed to the world by Bahá'u'lláh. Religion, as in the past, is still the world's sole hope, but not that form of religion which our ecclesiastical leaders strive vainly to preach. Divorced from true religion, morals lose their effectiveness and cease to guide and control man's individual and social life. But when true religion is combined with true ethics, then moral progress becomes a possibility and not a mere ideal. The need of our modern youth is for such a type of ethics founded on pure religious faith. Not until these two are rightly combined and brought into full action can there be any hope for the future of the race.
>
> (17 April 1936 to an individual believer, published in "Bahá'í News" 104 (December 1936), p. 1)

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1990, THE UHJ WROTE "APPOINTMENT OF CONTINENTAL PIONEER COMMITTEES" NOTING "WITH THE RAPID INCREASE OF OPPORTUNITIES OPENING AT THIS PERIOD ALL OVER THE WORLD FOR TEACHING THE FAITH TO THE MASSES OF HUMANITY, IT HAS BECOME ESSENTIAL THAT ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES BE TAKEN..."

April 17. On this date in 1990, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Appointment of Continental Pioneer Committees" noting "With the rapid increase of opportunities opening at this period all over the world for teaching the Faith to the masses of humanity, it has become essential that all possible measures be taken to ensure the swift, effective mobilization of pioneers, both long-term and short-term, and of international traveling teachers to meet the needs of every national community."

> **Appointment of Continental Pioneer Committees**
>
> 17 APRIL 1990
>
> To all National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends,
>
> The Universal House of Justice has reviewed the membership of all Continental Pioneer Committees and has made new appointments. The list of members is attached, along with statements of the present-day purpose and character of the Committees and of their functions.
>
> These Committees stand ready to help you with any problems you may have in planning the travels of teachers or the settlement of pioneers, and you are urged to make full use of their services. You should especially note the provisions which have been made for access to the International Deputization Fund in the financing of budgets for teachers and pioneers when necessary.
>
> With loving Bahá'í greetings,
>
> DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT
>
> **Continental Pioneer Committees**

A statement on their present-day purpose and character (January 1990)

Attached to this statement is a list of the functions of the Continental Pioneer Committees, as revised to reflect the current stage in the development of these Committees, the growing needs and opportunities of the Faith in the fields of pioneering (long-term and short-term) and traveling teaching, the increasing importance of close collaboration between the Committees and the Continental Counselors, and the cooperation of both with the National Spiritual Assemblies.

With the rapid increase of opportunities opening at this period all over the world for teaching the Faith to the masses of humanity, it has become essential that all possible measures be taken to ensure the swift, effective mobilization of pioneers, both long-term and short-term, and of international traveling teachers to meet the needs of every national community. The Continental Pioneer Committees serve as agencies, supplemental to the direct involvement of National Spiritual Assemblies in sending and receiving such manpower, by which every believer who arises for the service of Bahá'u'lláh may be sure of receiving the prompt, comprehensive guidance and assistance which he may need in carrying out his intention.

If pioneers and traveling teachers are to enter the field of service as rapidly, continuously, and effectively as the current historic hour demands, it is vital that the believers and institutions concerned are fully conversant with those instruments which have been created to serve their needs and with the methods and lines of communication which should be utilized. The Continental Pioneer Committees are one such instrument. This statement is designed to clarify their specific role in the process, to define their areas of responsibility, and to stipulate the resources at their disposal.

The functions of the Continental Pioneer Committees have been modifled to relieve the Committees, to some extent, of the information-gathering duties formerly assigned to them, to focus more on their duties as executive agencies in charge of facilitating pioneer and traveling teaching projects, to stress again to both the Committees and the Continental Boards of Counselors that close, creative interaction between the two institutions is an indispensable element in the application of the manpower resources of the Cause to the requirements of national Bahá'í communities, and to remind the National Spiritual Assemblies that they have access to the services of the International Teaching Center and the

International Deputization Fund through the channel of the Continental Pioneer Committees and that these Committees are ever ready to assist them in the settlement of pioneers and the implementation of traveling teaching projects.

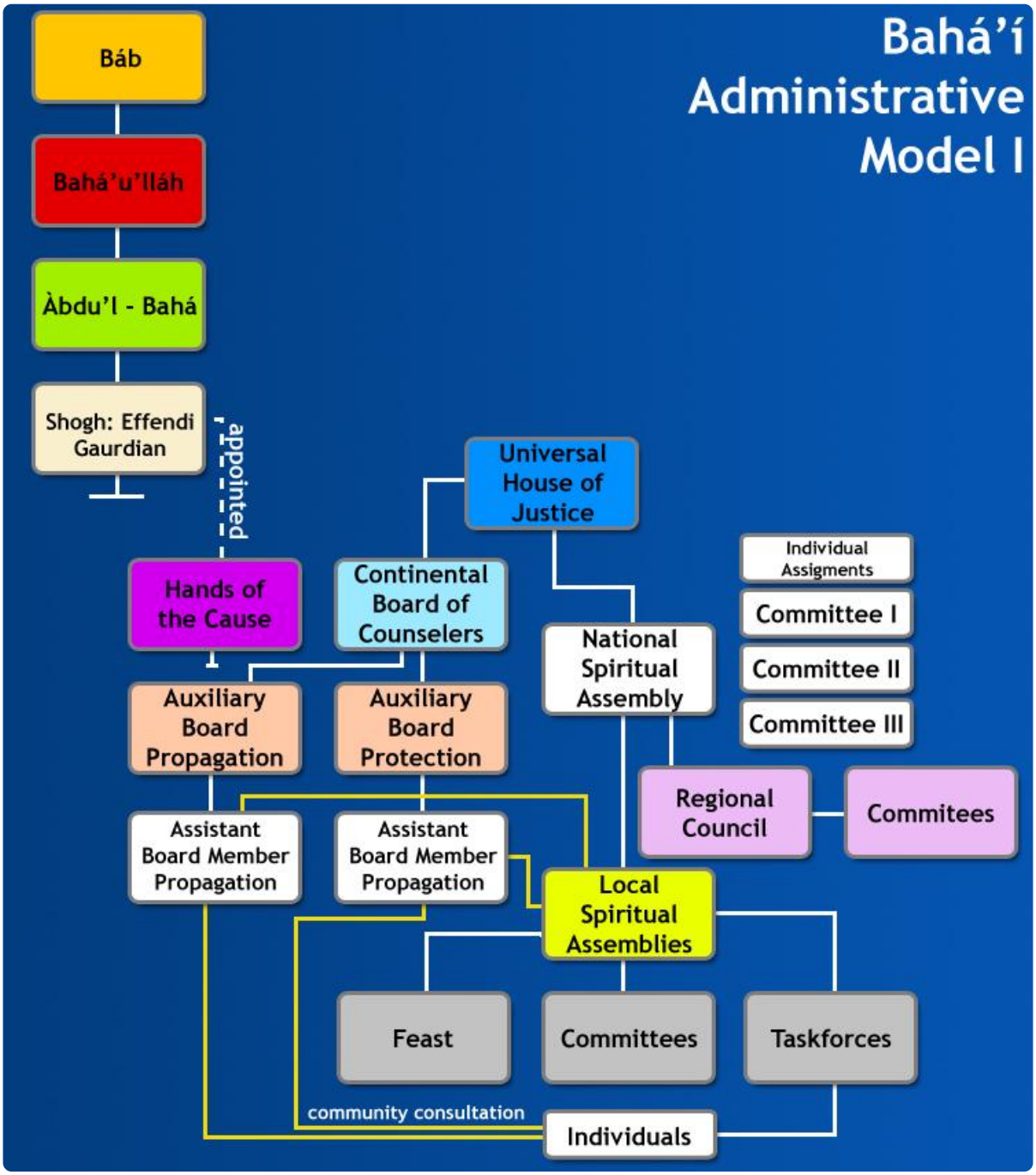
It is our particular hope that from time to time it may be possible for either the full membership, or at least the Secretary, of each Continental Pioneer Committee to meet with the Continental Board of Counselors in its region for consultation concerning the needs and possibilities of the continent in regard to pioneers and traveling teachers. The purpose of such consultation would be to ensure that areas where manpower is needed are quickly identified and all possible steps are taken to fill these needs. The Continental Boards of Counselors, with the Auxiliary Board members and the Continental Pioneer Committees, should likewise be alert to the need of cooperation with National Spiritual Assemblies in the orientation and briefing of pioneers and traveling teachers.

The Continental Pioneer Committees have been granted funds by the International Teaching Center with which to initiate or support traveling teaching projects which they themselves see are useful and needed. In addition, they constitute the correct avenue by means of which the National Spiritual Assemblies can apply for assistance from the International Deputization Fund for the support of either pioneer or traveling teaching projects. It is particularly important that this function of the Continental Pioneer Committees in regard to budgetary assistance be fully understood by both the National Spiritual Assemblies and the believers generally, especially insofar as it relates to the newly instituted short-term pioneer projects.

In the past, some of the Continental Pioneer Committees have found it useful to appoint a small number of regional representatives, in key distant locations of their continent, who have assisted them in the prompt discharge of their duties. This possibility is still open for the Committees to explore.

One of the most important aspects of this subject is the requirement for the rapid and accurate exchange of information needed to facilitate the movement and utilization of those believers who wish to join the ranks of pioneers and traveling teachers. The Continental Pioneer Committees require the full support and prompt cooperation of both the Continental Boards of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies in the discharge of their vital functions. In turn, these

institutions should be able to depend on the reliability, experience, and knowledge of the Continental Pioneer Committees.



Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE AN NSA "RESPONSE OF BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY TO BELIEVER SUFFERING FROM AIDS"

April 17. On this date in 1995, the Universal House of Justice wrote an NSA "Response of Bahá'í Community to Believer Suffering from AIDS"

> Response of Bahá'í Community to Believer Suffering from AIDS
>
> 17 APRIL 1995
>
> To a National Spiritual Assembly
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends,
>
> Your letter of 10 January 1995 to the Universal House of Justice was received by fax only on 14 February. It has asked us to convey to you that it was deeply saddened to learn that a member of your Bahá'í community has been diagnosed as being infected with the AIDS virus. If it will not be distressing to this friend to know that the news has been shared with the House of Justice, then you are asked to kindly extend to him (or her) its loving sympathy, and the assurance of its fervent prayers at the Sacred Threshold, beseeching Bahá'u'lláh to shower this servant of the Cause with His tender mercies and protection.
>
> You ask if there is any guidance on this matter. It is not clear from your letter whether the situation of this believer is commonly known in the Bahá'í community. If it is, then the House of Justice hopes you will encourage the Local Spiritual Assembly involved, and the friends in the community, to turn to non-Bahá'í agencies specializing in dealing with AIDS for information and counseling as appropriate or needed. Furthermore, all should draw inspiration and guidance from the peerless example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose compassion, loving understanding and sincere concern for the welfare of others exemplified the Bahá'í attitude to those who are suffering.
>
> With loving Bahá'í greetings,
>
> DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "AS REGARDS YOUR STUDY OF THE HINDU RELIGION..THE TASK OF CONVERTING THIS SECTION OF THE INDIAN POPULATION IS A MOST VITAL OBLIGATION..NEVERTHELESS THE FRIENDS SHOULD DO THEIR BEST TO MAKE AS MANY CONVERTS AMONG THE HINDUS AS THEY POSSIBLY CAN."

April 17. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi wrote "As regards your study of the Hindu religion...The task of converting this section of the Indian population is a most vital obligation, although the Guardian is fully aware of the many difficulties that it presents. Nevertheless the friends should do their best to make as many converts among the Hindus as they possibly can."

> As regards your study of the Hindu religion: The origins of this and many other religions that abound in India are not quite known to us, and even the Orientalists and the students of religion are not in complete accord about the results of their investigations in that field. The Bahá'í writings also do not refer specifically to any of these forms of religion current in India. So, the Guardian feels it impossible to give you any definite and detailed information on that subject. He would urge you, however, to carry on your studies in that field, although its immensity is wellnigh bewildering, with the view of bringing the Message to the Hindus. The task of converting this section of the Indian population is a most vital obligation, although the Guardian is fully aware of the many difficulties that it presents. Nevertheless the friends should do their best to make as many converts among the Hindus as they possibly can.
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi - 17 April 1936)

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHA GAVE A TALK AT THE HOTEL ANSONIA IN NEW YORK WHEREIN HE OUTLINED BAHÁ'Í EPISTEMOLOGY.

April 17. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Baha gave a talk at the Hotel Ansonia in New York wherein he outlined Bahá'í epistemology.

The Promulgation of Universal Peace

Talk given 17 April 1912

Talk at Hotel Ansonia

Broadway and Seventy-third Street, New York

Notes by Howard MacNutt

During my visit to London and Paris last year I had many talks with the materialistic philosophers of Europe. The basis of all their conclusions is that the acquisition of knowledge of phenomena is according to a fixed, invariable law--a law mathematically exact in its operation through the senses. For instance, the eye sees a chair; therefore, there is no doubt of the chair's existence. The eye looks up into the heavens and beholds the sun; I see flowers upon this table; I smell their fragrance; I hear sounds outside, etc. This, they say, is a fixed mathematical law of perception and deduction, the operation of which admits of no doubt whatever; for inasmuch as the universe is subject to our sensing, the proof is self-evident that our knowledge of it must be gained through the avenues of the senses. That is to say, the materialists announce that the criterion and standard of human knowledge is sense perception. Among the Greeks and Romans the criterion of knowledge was reason--that whatever is provable and acceptable by reason must necessarily be admitted as true. A third standard or criterion is the opinion held by theologians that traditions or prophetic statement and interpretations constitute the basis of human knowing. There is still another, a fourth criterion, upheld by religionists and metaphysicians who say that the source and channel of all human penetration into the unknown is through inspiration. **Briefly then, these four criteria according to the declarations of men are: first, sense perception; second, reason; third, traditions; fourth, inspiration.**

In Europe I told the philosophers and scientists of materialism that the criterion of the senses is not reliable. For instance, consider a mirror and the images reflected in it. These images have no actual corporeal existence. Yet if you had never seen a mirror, you would firmly insist and believe that they were real. The eye sees a mirage upon the desert as a lake of water, but there is no reality in it. As we stand upon the deck of a steamer, the shore appears to be moving, yet we know the land is stationary and we are moving. The earth was believed to be fixed and the sun revolving about it, but although this appears to be so, the reverse is now known to be true. A whirling torch makes a circle of fire appear before the eye, yet we realize there is but one point of light. We behold a shadow moving upon the ground, but it has no material existence, no substance. In deserts the atmospheric effects are particularly productive of illusions which deceive the eye. Once I saw a mirage in which a whole caravan appeared traveling upward into the sky. In the far North other deceptive phenomena appear and baffle human vision. Sometimes three or four suns, called by scientists mock suns, will be shining at the same time, whereas we know that the great solar orb is one and that it remains fixed and single. In brief, the senses are continually deceived, and we are unable to separate that which is reality from that which is not.

As to the second criterion--reason--this likewise is unreliable and not to be depended upon. This human world is an ocean of varying opinions. If reason is the perfect standard and criterion of knowledge, why are opinions at variance and why do philosophers disagree so completely with each other? This is a clear proof that human reason is not to be relied upon as an infallible criterion. For instance, great discoveries and announcements of former centuries are continually upset and discarded by the wise men of today. Mathematicians, astronomers, chemical scientists continually disprove and reject the conclusions of the ancients; nothing is fixed, nothing final; everything is continually changing because human reason is progressing along new roads of investigation and arriving at new conclusions every day. In the future much that is announced and accepted as true now will be rejected and disproved. And so it will continue ad infinitum.

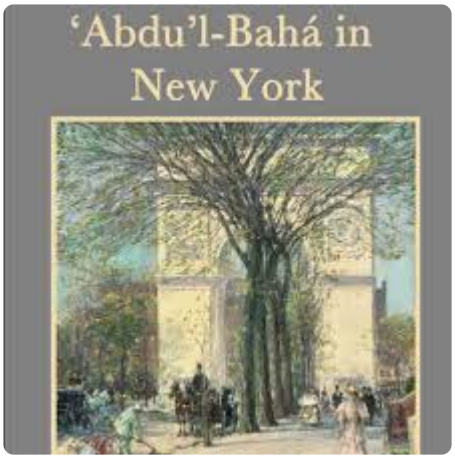
When we consider the third criterion--traditions--upheld by theologians as the avenue and standard of knowledge, we find this source equally unreliable and unworthy of dependence. For religious traditions are the report and record of understanding and interpretation of the Book. By what means has this

understanding, this interpretation been reached? By the analysis of human reason. When we read the Book of God, the faculty of comprehension by which we form conclusions is reason. Reason is mind. If we are not endowed with perfect reason, how can we comprehend the meanings of the Word of God? Therefore, human reason, as already pointed out, is by its very nature finite and faulty in conclusions. It cannot surround the Reality Itself, the Infinite Word. Inasmuch as the source of traditions and interpretations is human reason, and human reason is faulty, how can we depend upon its findings for real knowledge?

The fourth criterion I have named is inspiration through which it is claimed the reality of knowledge is attainable. What is inspiration? It is the influx of the human heart. But what are satanic promptings which afflict mankind? They are the influx of the heart also. How shall we differentiate between them? The question arises: How shall we know whether we are following inspiration from God or satanic promptings of the human soul? **Briefly, the point is that in the human material world of phenomena these four are the only existing criteria or avenues of knowledge, and all of them are faulty and unreliable. What then remains? How shall we attain the reality of knowledge? By the breaths and promptings of the Holy Spirit, which is light and knowledge itself. Through it the human mind is quickened and fortified into true conclusions and perfect knowledge. This is conclusive argument showing that all available human criteria are erroneous and defective, but the divine standard of knowledge is infallible. Therefore, man is not justified in saying, "I know because I perceive through my senses," or "I know because it is proved through my faculty of reason," or "I know because it is according to tradition and interpretation of the Holy Book," or "I know because I am inspired." All human standards of judgment are faulty, finite.**

The Promulgation of Universal Peace

pages 20-22



Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE NORTH AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS "MY PLEA, MY SUPREME ENTREATY" STATING " I FEEL IT NECESSARY TO ADD A WORD OF WARNING IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN SO SPLENDIDLY BEGUN LEST IT SHOULD BE JEOPARDIZED OR FRUSTRATED."

April 17. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote North American Bahá'ís "My Plea, My Supreme Entreaty" stating " I feel it necessary to add a word of warning in connection with the work that has been so splendidly begun lest it should be jeopardized or frustrated."

> My Plea, My Supreme Entreaty
>
> 17 APRIL 1939
>
> I have in two recent successive messages, cabled to your Assembly, given expression, as far as it lay in my power, to the feelings of overpowering gratitude which the response of so many pioneers to the call of teaching has evoked in my heart. I have moreover felt impelled to convey my congratulations to the members of your Assembly, who, through their resource, unity and singlemindedness, have lent so needed and timely an impetus to the mighty work associated with the second year of the Seven Year Plan.
>
> There can be no doubt whatever that what the American believers, no less than their elected national representatives, have accomplished, the long and assiduous care of the former and the potent methods employed by the latter have witnessed to the uprising of a new spirit on which the defamers of the Cause may well pause to reflect, and from which its lovers cannot but derive deep joy and solace. I again wish to thank with all my soul those whose acts have stirred the imagination of friend and foe alike.
>
> In my desire not to omit anything that might help to spur on or reinforce the community of the American believers as they move on to their destiny, I feel it necessary to add a word of warning in connection with the work that has been so splendidly begun lest it should be jeopardized or frustrated. The initial phase of the teaching work operating under the Seven Year Plan has at long last been concluded. They who have pushed it forward have withstood the test gloriously. By their acts,

whether as teachers or administrators, they have written a glorious page in the struggle for the laying of a continent-wide foundation for the Administrative Order of their Faith. At this advanced stage in the fulfilment of the purpose to which they have set their hand there can be no turning back, no halting, no respite. To launch the bark of the Faith, to implant its banner, is not enough. Support, ample, organized and unremitting, should be lent, designed to direct the course of that work and to lay an unassailable foundation for the fort destined to stand guard over that banner.

The National Spiritual Assembly, the National Teaching Committee, the Regional and Local Teaching Committees, no less than the itinerant teachers, should utilize every possible means calculated to fan the zeal, enrich the resources and ensure the solidity and permanency of the work, of those who, actuated by so laudable and shining a spirit of self-sacrifice, have arisen to face the hazards and perils of so holy and historic an adventure. Indeed every believer, however humble and inexperienced, should sense the obligation to play his or her part in a mission that involves so very deeply the destinies not only of the American Bahá'í community but of the nation itself.

Whether through the frequency of their visits, the warmth of their correspondence, the liberality of their support, the wisdom of their counsels, the choice of the literature placed at the disposal of the pioneers, the members of the community should, at this hour when the sands of a moribund civilization are inexorably running out, and at a time when they are preparing themselves to launch yet another stage in their teaching activities, ensure the security, and provide for the steady expansion, of the work initiated in those territories so recently set alight from the torch of an inextinguishable Faith.

This is my plea, my supreme entreaty.

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1991, AN INDIVIDUAL WROTE THE UHJ WITH A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ON A SEVERAL TOPICS, INCLUDING THE CAPITALIZATION OF PRONOUNS IN BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE AND 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S REFERENCE TO "WE MUSLIMS".

April 17. On this date in 1991, an individual wrote the UHJ with a number of questions on a several topics, including the capitalization of pronouns in Bahá'í literature and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reference to "we Muslims".

Secret of Divine Civilization Translation, Capital Punishment, and Other Questions by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1991-06-20 Department of the Secretariat 20 June 1991 Mr. ...

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 17 April 1991 in which you asked for guidance in the matter of capitalization of pronouns referring to Abdu'l-Baha, and other questions that came to your attention while you were working on the translation into Portuguese of "The Secret of Divine Civilization".

We are now able to send you the enclosed copy of the memorandum dated 23 May 1991, and its two attachments, prepared in response.

The House of Justice commends you on the valuable contribution you have made to the range of Bahá'í literature in Portuguese and wishes you well in your continuing efforts in this important field of service to the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat Enclosure (with two attachments)

MEMORANDUM To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 23 May 1991 From: The Research Department "THE SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION" The Research Department has studied the questions raised by Mr. ... in his letter of 17 April 1991 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. ... is engaged in translating "The Secret of Divine Civilization" into Portuguese. Many of the questions he poses in his letter result from a close study of this book. We provide the following response.

1. Capitalization of Pronouns

Mr. ... lists a number of places in "The Secret of Divine Civilization" where the pronouns that refer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá are capitalized. Mr. ... indicates that he is aware that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was known as the Master during the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh and he enquires whether His station, at that time, was "already so special that He should refer to Himself with [a] capital letter"?

In contrast to many European languages, in Persian, personal pronouns are never capitalized. 'Abdu'l-Bahá followed this established rule and did not capitalize the pronouns that refer to Him. When the book was translated into English, the particular translator employed the convention, common in English, of capitalizing pronouns. It is interesting to note that when 'Abdu'l-Bahá signed His name in English, He used a combination of upper and lower case letters. He, typically, wrote "abdul Baha abbas" — the reference to Bahá'u'lláh being the only word He capitalized.

On the same principle it is the policy of the Universal House of Justice when approving translations of Tablets written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, generally to have "me" and "my" and "mine" in lower case, following the example given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the writing of His own name in Roman letters. Pronouns used in referring to 'Abdu'l-Bahá by someone else, however, are normally capitalized. This policy can be seen in "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982).

With regard to English usage, Shoghi Effendi endorsed the capitalization of all pronouns referring to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as a mark of respect for the Stations of the Central Figures of the Faith. A letter dated 22 November 1949 written on his behalf states:

In regard to your question about capitalizing the pronouns: the Guardian realizes this looks a little strange to non-Bahá'ís, but he feels we, being believers, and having the full sense of the Stations of the Central Figures of our Faith, should do this as a sign of respect under all circumstances. It can, nevertheless, be noticed in the Guardian's translations of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets and Prayers, that sometimes he capitalizes "Me" and "My" and sometimes not, depending upon the context in which Bahá'u'lláh was referring to Himself; in humility towards God or in majesty towards mankind. As to translations of the Bahá'í Writings and literature written by Bahá'ís in other languages, Shoghi Effendi in letters written on his behalf, extracts from which are cited below, stressed the importance of conforming to the rules of the particular language:

It is not necessary to use capital letters, as we do in English, for the personal pronouns of the Master, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, as long as there is no comparable usage of them in Norwegian. The same applies to the word Bahá'í. We do not try to introduce new forms into a language, but

in English the precedent exists in the Bible and in good usage. (24 August 1949 to an individual believer) He is interested in accomplishing two things — he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible; he does not wish the Bahá'í translations to be in any way a flagrant violation of the rules of the language into which our literature is being translated. Your Committee must conscientiously study this question, and then do the best you can to have the Bahá'í literature in French meet the high standards of the French language and grammar.

If the possessive and demonstrative adjectives and pronouns in French are never capitalized where they stand for "God", then this should not be done in the Bahá'í literature. If there is a precedent for doing so in the French language, however, they should be. The same is true of the attributes of God.

(15 February 1957 to the French National Translation and Publication Committee)

1. Reference to "we (i.e., Muslims)", p. 43 Mr. ... enquires whether the insertion of the parenthetic term "(i.e., Muslims)" could convey the idea that 'Abdu'l-Bahá considered Himself a Muslim or rather, if, in this sentence, the Master might be referring to the Persian people. The parenthetic insertion does not occur in the original Persian text. It has been added by the translator. The Research Department has not been able to locate any authorized interpretation of this particular passage. From a study of the context, however, it appears that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is comparing the energetic activities of the Protestants in raising up the "Word of God" and in increasing "the number of believers" with the failure and inactivity of the "Muslim religious authorities". The "we", in this case, might well be a reference to such Muslims as have failed in their duty as defenders of their faith.

It is also useful to consider that "The Secret of Divine Civilization" was addressed to a non-Bahá'í audience at a time when modernization and reform were important contemporary issues in Iran. The book was first published anonymously. It is, therefore, suggested that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's use of "we" and "us" throughout the text might well have intended to communicate the fact that He was writing as a concerned citizen who was offering constructive ideas pertinent to the ultimate well-being of His native land.

1. Identity of "the ruler", p. 61

As to the identity of "the ruler who is fostering peace and tranquillity and at the same time devoting more energy than warmongers to the accumulation of weapons ... on the grounds that peace and harmony can only be brought about by force", the Research Department has not, to

date, been able to identify this ruler. It is interesting to note that, when the Persian text of this passage is studied, it could also be read in such a way as to represent a generalization about rulers who engage in this type of hypocritical behaviour, rather than necessarily specifying a particular contemporary "ruler". An earlier English translation, published in 1918 under the title of "Mysterious Forces of Civilization" reflected the more general sense. A photocopy of the page is attached [see below]. With regard to this translation, please note that the inverted commas around part of the text are not found in the original text.

It is the view of the Research Department that, if the Master intended a particular "ruler", it will be difficult to identify him since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's description could well have applied to most of the kings who were addressed, individually, by Bahá'u'lláh. One possible candidate could be Napoleon III, who was characterized by Shoghi Effendi in "The Promised Day Is Come" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 49-50, as "the most outstanding monarch of his day in the West". As such, Napoleon would, no doubt, have also been well known in the East. However, in the absence of an authoritative text, this suggestion remains in the realm of speculation.

1. Bahá'í View of Capital Punishment, p. 100

Mr. ... enquires about the Bahá'í position on the death penalty. We provide for Mr. ...'s study, passages from the Writings and letters of the Universal House of Justice, from which a number of relevant principles can be drawn. For example:

The community has the right to defend and protect its rights, but not to seek revenge, by the imposition of a legal punishment (extract 1). The power of the divine Revelation to transform human behaviour is a powerful means of preventing crime (extracts 1 and 3).

While the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" invokes capital punishment, it also provides for the alternative penalty of life imprisonment (extracts, 2, 3, and 4).

The punishments for murder and arson mentioned in "A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of Bahá'u'lláh" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice (extracts 3 and 4).

Capital punishment could be prescribed for wilful murder and arson depending on the degree of the offence and extenuating circumstances (extracts 3 and 4).

1. "... a second volume", p. 106 With regard to the "second volume" anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in which He would further elucidate important "subjects which today are neglected", the Master did not write "a second volume" addressed to the people of Persia. He did, however, write "A Treatise on Statesmanship" in 1893. This work which, to date, has not been translated into English, is addressed to the Bahá'í community of Persia.

2. Works of 'Abdu'l-Baha Revealed during the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh

Mr. ... notes two examples of works revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the life-time of Bahá'u'lláh — the Tablet concerning the Tradition of the "Hidden Treasure" and "The Secret of Divine Civilization" — and he poses a number of questions. He asks whether "The Secret of Divine Civilization" was revealed at the request of Bahá'u'lláh, whether other works were written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during this time period and, if so, whether they have been translated into English. He also enquires whether it would be correct to say that during Bahá'u'lláh's ministry, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would only write a book or a Tablet at the request of His Father.

In a Tablet, quoted in Persian in the book "The Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1986), p. 42, by Muhammad-'Alí Faizi, Bahá'u'lláh explains the circumstances under which "The Secret of Divine Civilization" came to be revealed. He states that one day, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in His presence, He asked the Greatest Branch ('Abdu'l-Bahá) to write a number of pages on the causes of the world's destruction and of its prosperity and salvation, as a means both of reducing the resistance of those who were inflexibly opposed to change and of preparing them to listen to the Call of God.

The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are the fruit of over fifty years of prolific labour, from His early twenties to the end of His life. They consist of personal correspondence, general Tablets, Tablets on specific themes, books, prayers, poems, public talks, and recorded conversations. (See the article, "The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" by Amin Banani in "The Bahá'í World", vol. XV (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1976) for additional information). One other major work which was written during the life-time of Bahá'u'lláh, which has been translated into English, is "A Travellers Narrative" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980). This book, written around 1886, was published anonymously. It is a history of the episode of the Báb. It presents a brief and dispassionate account of that portentous Dispensation in a simple and moving narrative.

With regard to whether 'Abdu'l-Bahá only wrote at the instruction of His Father; while in certain instances Bahá'u'lláh specifically instructed 'Abdu'l-Bahá to write on designated topics, it would not be accurate to say that 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote only at Bahá'u'lláh's explicit bidding. It is useful to consider Shoghi Effendi's descriptions of the degree of rapport and unity of purpose that existed between Bahá'u'lláh and His Son. For example, in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), pp. 325-326, he states that Bahá'u'lláh's "purpose" had been "thoroughly infused into the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" and that "His Spirit" had "profoundly" permeated "His being". And, in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", Shoghi Effendi writes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá "gets His light, His inspiration and sustenance direct from the Fountainhead of the Bahá'í Revelation" and that "He reflects even as a clear and perfect Mirror the rays of Bahá'u'lláh's glory". Based on the foregoing, it is inconceivable that, in the absence of any specific instructions from His Father, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's actions could have, in any way, run counter to Bahá'u'lláh's will and purpose.

1. The First Person to Recognize Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God

Mr. ... refers to several sources in the literature of the Bahá'í Faith where the first person to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God is identified. Those named include 'Abdu'l-Bahá (see Balyuzi's book "'Abdu'l-Bahá The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh" (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 13), Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi (see "Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory" (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980, p. 109 and pp. 67-68). He asks how this apparent contradiction is to be resolved.

It is evident that the term "the first" to recognize Bahá'u'lláh had different meanings according to the context of its use. For example, given 'Abdu'l-Bahá's designation as "the Mystery of God" and His unique relationship with His Father, it is possible that the reference is to the spiritual realm, a realm which transcends time. While, in the case of Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi, the application of the term is necessarily in the context of the human plane of existence.

In relation to Mírzá Áqá Ján, Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By", p. 115, clearly affirms that Mírzá Áqá Ján was "the first to believe" in Bahá'u'lláh, and that to him, Bahá'u'lláh, more than to anyone else, was moved to disclose, at this critical juncture, a glimpse of the as yet unrevealed glory of His station.

Hence, one possible distinction between Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi could well relate to the degree or extent of their recognition, with primacy being accorded to Mírzá Áqá Ján.

1. Designer of the House of Worship in 'Ishqabad

Mr. ... refers to statements concerning the designer of the House of Worship in 'Ishqabad, which are contained in "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh", vol. 4, p. 122, by Mr. Taherzadeh and in Mr. Balyuzi's "'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant", pp. 109-110. In the former, mention is made of the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá conceived a plan for a nine-sided building and that the main features of the design were prepared by Ustad 'All-Akbar-i-Banna, while in the second book, the general design is attributed to the Master. Mr. ... enquires whether both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Ustad 'Ali-Akbar-i-Banna can be described as the authors of the general design of this House of Worship.

'Abdu'l-Bahá defined the essential architectural character of the Bahá'í House of Worship as consisting of a nine-sided, circular building. All Houses of Worship, therefore, incorporate these design features and the Master's instructions guide the architects in the preparation of their unique, individual designs. The design of the first 'Ishqábád Temple, prepared by Ustád 'Ali-Akbar-i-Banná, was likewise influenced and inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's archetypal design. Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By", p. 300, refers to the Master's intense personal interest in the construction of the 'Ishqábád House of Worship. He affirms that it was "fostered by Him at every stage in its development".

[Attachments 2]

Comments

APRIL 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1981, THE UHJ WROTE ALL NSAS THAT "IF THE BELIEVER IS THE ONLY ONE OF HIS FAMILY WHO HAS EMBRACED THE FAITH, IT IS HIS DUTY TO ENDEAVOUR TO LEAD AS MANY OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE TO THE LIGHT OF DIVINE GUIDANCE."

April 17. On this date in 1981, the UHJ wrote all NSAs that "If the believer is the only one of his family who has embraced the Faith, it is his duty to endeavour to lead as many other family members as possible to the light of divine guidance."

746. Duty of Believer to Endeavour to Lead Family to the Faith

"...If the believer is the only one of his family who has embraced the Faith, it is his duty to endeavour to lead as many other family members as possible to the light of divine guidance. As soon as a Bahá'í family unit emerges, the members should feel responsible for making the collective life of the family a spiritual reality, animated by divine love and inspired by the ennobling principles of the Faith. To achieve this purpose, the reading of the Sacred Writings and prayers should ideally become a daily family activity. As far as the teaching work is concerned, just as individuals are called upon to adopt teaching goals, the family itself could adopt its own goals. In this way the friends could make of their families strong healthy units, bright candles for the diffusion of the light of the Kingdom, and powerful centres to attract the heavenly confirmations."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, April 17, 1981)

Comments

APRIL 18. ON THIS DATE IN 2000, JUDGE DOROTHY WRIGHT NELSON, WHO SERVED ON THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1967 TO 2009, RECEIVED THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO DISPUTE RESOLUTION.

April 18. On this date in 2000, Judge Dorothy Wright Nelson, who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1967 until her retirement in 2009, received the American Bar Association award for outstanding contribution to dispute resolution.

Comments

APRIL 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1863, WILLIAM HENRY RANDALL, A MEMBER OF BAHA'I TEMPLE UNITY AND DISCIPLE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, WAS BORN.

April 18. On this date in 1863, William Henry Randall, a member of Baha'i Temple Unity and Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born.

WILLIAM HENRY RANDALL

Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bahíyyih Randall-Winckler
IN COLLABORATION WITH
M. R. Garis

Comments

APRIL 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1930, A LETTER FROM RUHI AFNAN AND SHOGHI AFNAN TO AGNES ALEXANDER EXPRESSED "HOPES THAT THE TRANSLATION OF DR. ESSLEMONT'S BOOK WILL PROCEED AT A RAPID PACE...THIS BOOK IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSITION OF THE TEACHINGS YET WRITTEN."

April 18. On this date in 1930, a letter from Ruhi Afnan and Shoghi Afnan to Agnes Alexander expressed "hopes that the translation of Dr. Esslemont's book will proceed at a rapid pace...this book is undoubtedly the most comprehensive exposition of the Teachings yet written."

(April 18, 1930)

He (the Guardian) sincerely hopes that the translation of Dr. Esslemont's book will proceed at a rapid pace, because no real advance can be made in the teaching work without proper literature, and this book is undoubtedly the most comprehensive exposition of the Teachings yet written. The language should, however, be worthy of the theme otherwise it would not make the necessary appeal to the educated classes.

Shoghi Effendi was very pleased to hear that Keith (Ransom-Kehler) has achieved some success in Japan. The explicit promise of Bahá'u'lláh is that God's spirit will assist all those who, with a sincere and detached heart, arise to spread the teachings. There is no reason for astonishment therefore if the teachers of the Cause find success in their work. May God's spirit continue to sustain them.

(signed by Ruhi Afnan)

(in the Guardian's handwriting)

Dear and valued co-worker:

I am eagerly awaiting the news of the publication in Japanese of that prized book which Dr. Esslemont has so wonderfully laboured to produce.

When received it will adorn the newly-restored mansion of Bahá'u'lláh adjoining His Shrine at Bahji. May the Beloved sustain and bless your magnificent efforts.

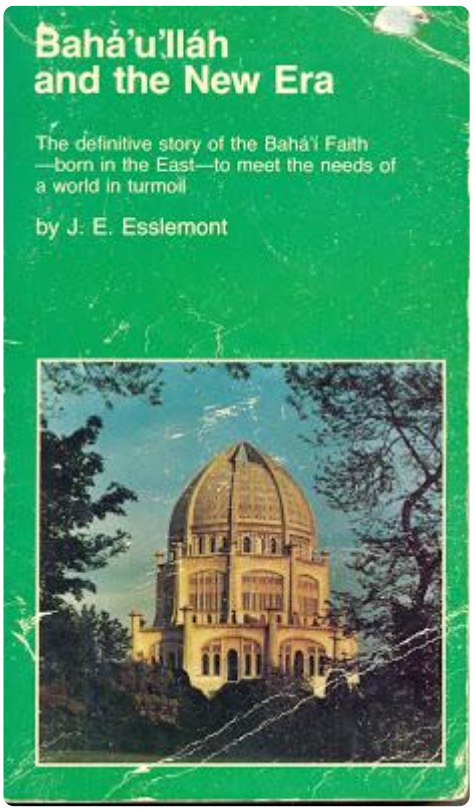
Your true brother, Shoghi

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

> Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the

ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)


Bahá'u'lláh
and the New Era
The definitive story of the Bahá'í Faith
—born in the East—to meet the needs of
a world in turmoil
by J. E. Esslemont

Comments

APRIL 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "BY 'GOVERNMENT', ON PAGE 210 OF THE 'BAHÁ'Í WORLD' VOL. VI, IS MEANT THE EXECUTIVE BODY WHICH WILL ENFORCE THE LAWS WHEN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH HAS REACHED THE POINT WHEN IT IS RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED ENTIRELY BY ANY PARTICULAR NATION."

April 18. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "By 'Government', on page 210 of the 'Bahá'í World' Vol. VI, is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation."

> 1604. "Hosts of His Testament" and "Cord"
>
> "Regarding your questions: By 'Government', on page 210 of the 'Bahá'í World' Vol. VI, is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation. On page 205, indem, the 'Hosts of His Testament' refers to those who are firm in the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh and who defend and uphold it.
>
> "The word 'cord', so often mentioned in the teachings, means both the Faith itself and also the power of the Faith which sustains those who cling to it."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 18, 1941; also see The Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 14-15)

Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI DESCRIBED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BAHÁ'Í CAUSE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER AS "INSEPARABLY BOUND TO EACH OTHER, IN VERY MUCH THE SAME RELATIONSHIP EXISTING BETWEEN THE SOUL AND BODY IN THE WORLD OF HUMAN EXISTENCE."

April 19. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi described the relationship between the Bahá'í Cause and Administrative Order as "inseparably bound to each other, in very much the same relationship existing between the soul and body in the world of human existence."

6. Relationship of the Cause to the Administration

"Regarding the relationship of the Cause to the Administration: The Bahá'í Faith, as the Guardian himself has repeatedly and emphatically stated, cannot be confined to a mere system of organization, however elaborate in its features and universal in its scope it may be. Organization is only a means to the realization of its aims and ideals, and not an end in itself. To divorce the two, however, would be to mutilate the Cause itself, as they stand inseparably bound to each other, in very much the same relationship existing between the soul and body in the world of human existence."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 19, 1939)

Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 2001, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER REGARDING "THE TIMING FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF THE LESSER PEACE, IN LIGHT OF YOUR IMPRESSION THAT THE BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS ANTICIPATE ITS COMING BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY; I.E., THE END OF DECEMBER 2000.

April 19. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding "the timing for the occurrence of the Lesser Peace, in light of your impression that the Bahá'í Writings anticipate its coming before the conclusion of the twentieth century; i.e., the end of December 2000."

Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1925, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE IF "PEOPLE ACCUSTOMED TO A LOWER STANDARD OF LIFE AND CULTURE ARE FREELY ADMITTED, AND ALLOWED UNRESTRICTED RIGHTS OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITION, THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND CULTURE IN THAT COUNTRY IS BOUND TO SUFFER."

April 19. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote "there is undoubtedly truth in the contention that if, in a country where a reasonably high standard of living, of culture, etc., has been attained, people accustomed to a lower standard of life and culture are freely admitted, and allowed unrestricted rights of commercial and industrial competition, the standard of living and culture in that country is bound to suffer."

19 April 1925

Major Norman Macleod, Army Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, Australia.**12**

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Shoghi Effendi was very pleased to receive your letter of 11th March and to hear that you had become a Bahá'í through the instrumentality of Martha Root. Martha Root has just been here and stayed fully a month in Haifa. She has now gone forth again fired with fresh enthusiasm to resume her splendid work for the Cause. She is now in Cairo, but on 1st May will leave for Europe. After consultation with Shoghi Effendi, her provisional plan is to spend the next year or two in Europe, where teachers such as she are greatly needed. She will probably spend 3 or 4 months in Geneva and then to on to England, then to other European countries, including Russia, if circumstances permit.

With regard to your question about the "White Australia" policy, it is clear that this policy of rigid exclusion of coloured Asiatic races from Australia finds no justification in the Bahá'í Teachings.

Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá taught in the clearest possible way the necessity of getting rid of all racial and national prejudices and of equal justice for men of all races and colours. That a white race should forcibly annex a country previously

inhabited exclusively by coloured people and then proceed to forbid the admission of coloured people to that country - especially a country so large as Australia, many parts of which are obviously better suited for coloured races than for white people - is clearly unjust.

At the same time **there is undoubtedly truth in the contention that if, in a country where a reasonably high standard of living, of culture, etc., has been attained, people accustomed to a lower standard of life and culture are freely admitted, and allowed unrestricted rights of commercial and industrial competition, the standard of living and culture in that country is bound to suffer.**

Even if we got rid of racial and colour prejudice, this economic and cultured problem would remain. The Bahá'í method of solving the problem is to educate both the white and coloured races in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The white races must cease to regard themselves as "superior" and as having, by virtue of that innate superiority a right to exploit, take unfair advantage of and even to exterminate coloured races, on the principle of the "survival of the fittest". They must cease to regard the colour of a man's skin as a legitimate index of his "superiority" or "inferiority" and must recognise that a good coloured man (of whom there are many) is better than a bad white man (of whom there are also many). They must adopt a policy of even-handed justice for white and coloured people and recognise that coloured and white people have equally the right to live and to have access to suitable land on which to live. If there are certain parts of the world which by reason of climate are more suited to coloured people than to white, then coloured people ought to have preference in rights of access to such land, if white people have preferential rights in cooler regions, more suited to their health and well-being.

The "backward" races must be educated and their standard of living and culture be raised as much as possible, their latent talents being developed to the fullest possible extent. If this is done their objectionable characteristics will disappear.

The so-called "advanced" races however, are by no means free from objectionable characteristics, such as commercial greed, love of domination, materialistic

conceptions, want of spirituality. By true education and true religion these also must be got rid of.

When both the "backward" and the "advanced" races become educated in this way, then such questions as the admission of coloured races to Australian territories will no longer be settled by certain people who have seized such territory dictating to the rest of the world who shall be allowed admission to it, but by an impartial international tribunal in which all sections of the human race shall be fairly represented and which will consider the pressure of population in various regions, the suitability of various regions for the habitation of different peoples, etc., and decide what is best in the interests of humanity as a whole.

For the satisfactory solution of any one such question we need the progressive application of all the Bahá'í principles. For instance in this case it is clear that racial and national prejudices must be abolished, that universal education is necessary, that a universal league of nations must have an authority superseding that of any one nation, that impartial arbitration must be substituted for domination by powers which are backed by strong armies and navies, that an international language is needed to promote international understanding, that materialism and selfish greed must be replaced by true religion and mutual love, and so on.

The ideals of the Oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of humanity must be instilled into the minds of the children throughout the world, and when a generation grows up thoroughly imbued with these great ideals, the solution of the economic and political problems that now cause so much misery, strife and even blood-shed in the world will become easy.

Meantime in political and economic matters, compromise is necessary but we must use our influence to see that the compromise is ever being modified and advanced in the direction of justice for all - not in the direction of the exclusive advantage of one section of the world's population over others.

We are delighted to hear of the growth of the Bahá'í Group in Melbourne. In the growth of the Bahá'í movement, it seems to me, lies the hope of the world for the solution of all the problems that now vex and trouble it. It is very encouraging to note not only the steady increase in the number and size of our Bahá'í groups, but the steady trend of public opinion throughout the world towards acceptance of the great fundamental principles laid down sixty years ago by Bahá'u'lláh. There are

backward eddies in the current, of course, and this "White Australia" policy seems to me to be one of them, but on the whole the progress of Bahá'í principles seems to me to be amazing during the last half-century and this to me is one of the clearest proofs of the true prophethood of Bahá'u'lláh.

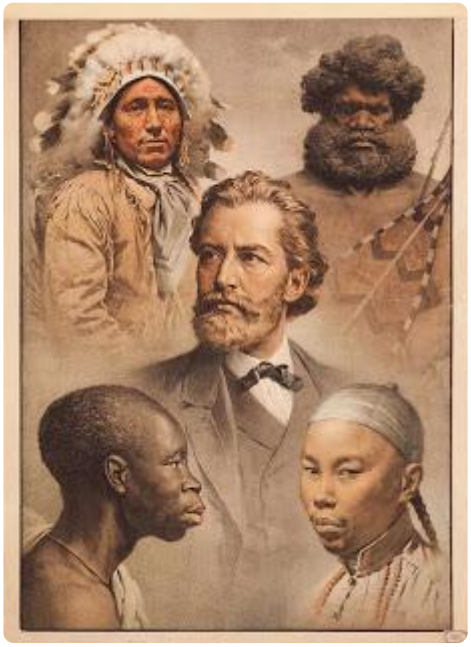
From your name I presume that either you or your parents hail from the same side of the Tweed as myself. My native town is Aberdeen. The name of Norman MacLeod was a highly honoured one in Scotland in my childhood's days and is still. Are you a near relative of the great Presbyterian Divine we used to hear so much about?

Shoghi Effendi is looking forward to meeting Rev. D. Millar of Melbourne. We had a delightful visit from Effie Baker of Melbourne and four New Zealand friends. They spent about 3 weeks here and then went on to England.

Shoghi Effendi and the friends here join in warmest regards and best wishes to yourself and all the friends in Melbourne especially to Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, who are doing such fine work for the advancement of the Cause.

Your brother in the Master's service, J.E. Esslemont.

12 Major MacLeod became Bahá'í during Martha Root's visit to Melbourne in 1924, and was subsequently Vice-President of the Melbourne Assembly. Little is known of him after 1926.



Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1981, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE THE NSA OF HAWAII "ABOUT THE ENROLLMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MENTALLY INCOMPETENT, DRUG USERS, ALCOHOLICS, ETC."

April 19. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Hawaii wrote "about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc."

259. Mental Instability Has No Bearing Upon Acceptance of an Enrollment

"In response to your letter of 11 March 1981, conveying the question of one of your Local Spiritual Assemblies about the enrollment of individuals who are mentally incompetent, drug users, alcoholics, etc., the Universal House of Justice asks us to convey the following.

"The acceptance of a person into the Bahá'í community should be based not on whether he is leading an exemplary life, but on whether the Assembly is reasonably certain that he is sincere in his declaration of faith in Bahá'u'lláh and that he knows of the laws which would affect his personal conduct, so that he does not enter the community under a misapprehension. The question of mental instability has no bearing upon the acceptance of an enrollment unless it is of such a nature that it affects the ability of the declarant to judge whether or not he believes in Bahá'u'lláh."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, April 19, 1981)

Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 2013, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER "REGARDING THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY YOUNG BAHÁ'Í MEN AND WOMEN IN WESTERN COUNTRIES IN ADHERING TO CERTAIN OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH' S TEACHINGS."

April 19. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "regarding the difficulties experienced by young Bahá'í men and women in Western countries in adhering to certain of Bahá'u'lláh' s teachings."

Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 2004, AZIZ YAZDI DIED. HE HAD SERVED AS AN AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER IN AFRICA; A COUNSELLOR FOR CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA; A MEMBER OF THE NSA OF CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA, AND LATER OF KENYA; AND AS ONE OF THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE ITC, FROM 1973 TO 1988.

April 19. On this date in 2004, Aziz Yazdi died. He had served as one of the first members of the International Teaching Centre, from 1973 to 1988. He had previously served as an Auxiliary Board member in Africa; a Counsellor for Central and East Africa; and as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa, and later of Kenya.

Aziz Yazdi was born in 1909 in Alexandria, Egypt to Bahá'í parents who had traveled there on direction from Bahá'u'lláh, who Yazdi's grandfather had previously met. During Bahá'u'lláh's confinement in 'Akká the Yazdi's trading company in Egypt was used to send and receive correspondence and tablets.

Aziz Yazdi was given his name by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his 1910 visit in Alexandria. During World War One, the Yazdi family moved to Damascus on the instructions of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and in 1919 'Abdu'l-Bahá called the family to Haifa. Aziz Yazdi remained there until 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death on November 28, 1921..

Aziz Yazdi's brother, Ali (later a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and husband to Marion Carpenter Yazdi), was instrumental in assisting Bahiyyih Khánum in preventing Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí from taking over 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house after his death.

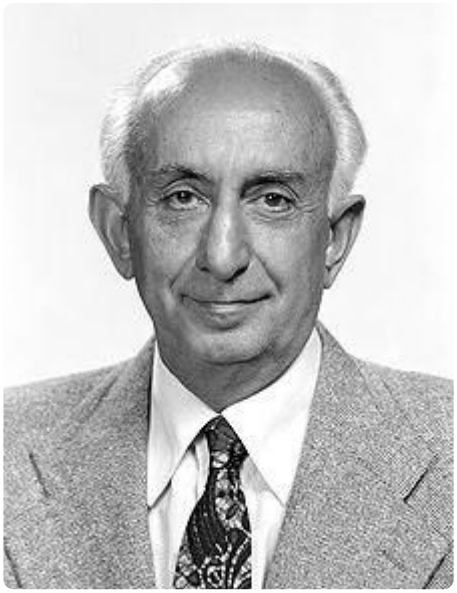
Aziz Yazdi studied banking in Egypt and electrical engineering in England. In 1941 he married Soraya Khamsi, with whom he had four children. He lived in a number of countries including Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Great Britain, Uganda, Kenya, Israel, and Canada.

While in Iran he worked in the oil industry, and in Kenya he ran a successful import business for 20 years.

He was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Central and East Africa, and later of Kenya. In 1954 he was appointed as a member of the Auxiliary Board in Africa, and in 1968 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Central and East Africa. In 1973, Aziz Yazdi was appointed to the newly-established International Teaching Centre, on

which body he served until retiring in 1988. Upon his retirement, he moved with his wife to Canada, where he died on April 19, 2004 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Aziz Yazdi was survived by his children Mona Yazdi Grieser, Vida Yazdi Ditter, Jamileh Yazdi, and Aziz John Yazdi, and by his seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



Comments

APRIL 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "'ABDU'L-BAHA COMPARED THE ORIGINAL AMERICANS, THE INDIANS, WITH THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF ARABIA. HE SAID THAT THE ARABS WERE MURDERERS. THEY KILLED THEIR OWN GIRL CHILDREN. THE URINE OF CATTLE WAS THEIR PERFUME. BUT THEY BECAME ..."

April 19. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "'Abdu'l-Baha compared the original Americans, the Indians, with the original inhabitants of Arabia. He said that the Arabs were murderers. They killed their own girl children. The urine of cattle was their perfume. But they became saints and heroes."

Comments

APRIL 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1958, AHMAD SOHRAB DIED. HE HAD SERVED AS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S SECRETARY AND INTERPRETER, AND IN 1929, WITH LEWIS STUYVESANT CHANLER AND HIS WIFE JULIE, FORMED THE "NEW HISTORY SOCIETY" IN ORDER TO PROPAGATE THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH. CONFLICT AROSE WHEN HORACE HOLLEY, MEMBER OF ...

April 20. On this date in 1958, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab died. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member of the NSA of the U.S. and Canada, and the New York Spiritual Assembly attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," ultimately resulting in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

On January 24, 1957, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly admonishing the Assembly that an unnamed individual "cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."

> 1394. New History Society--Avowed Enemies of the Faith
>
> "As regards ..., he should be kindly but firmly admonished by your Assembly that he cannot consider himself spiritually a Bahá'í and be associated with the avowed enemies of the Faith such as the New History Society; and that he should discontinue supporting their work or having anything to do with them; otherwise, he will find that he has been deprived wholly of his association with the Bahá'í

Cause; in other words, he will not only lose his voting rights, but be outside the Faith."

(From a letter of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 24, 1957)

Sohrab arrives in Frankfurt

Comments

APRIL 20. ON THIS DATE CELEBRATING CANNABIS CULTURE, IT IS WORTH REFLECTING ON `ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S WORDS: "REGARDING HASHISH, YOU HAD POINTED OUT THAT SOME PERSIANS HAVE BECOME HABITUATED TO ITS USE. GRACIOUS GOD! THIS IS THE WORST OF ALL INTOXICANTS, AND ITS PROHIBITION IS EXPLICITLY REVEALED..."

April 20. On this date celebrating cannabis culture, it is worth reflecting on `Abdu'l-Bahá's words: "Regarding hashish, you had pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to its use. Gracious God! This is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul. How could anyone seek this fruit of the infernal tree, and by partaking of it, be led to exemplify the qualities of a monster? How could one use this forbidden drug, and thus deprive himself of the blessings of the All-Merciful?"

> 1184. The Use of Marijuana, LSD and Other Psychedelic Products
>
> "In reply to your request of October 24, 1967 that we issue a statement concerning 'the use of marijuana, LSD and other psychedelic products', we have already informed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that Bahá'ís should not use hallucinogenic agents, including LSD, peyote and similar substances, except when prescribed for medical treatment. Neither should they become involved in experiments with such substances.
>
> "Although we have found no direct reference to marijuana in the Bahá'í writings, since this substance is derived from what is considered to be a milder form of cannabis, the species used to produce hashish, we can share with you a translation from the Persian of a Tablet of Abdu'l-Bahá on hashish:
>
> 'Regarding hashish, you had pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to its use. Gracious God! This is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul. How could anyone seek this fruit of the infernal tree, and by partaking of it, be led to exemplify the qualities of a monster? How

could one use this forbidden drug, and thus deprive himself of the blessings of the All-Merciful?...

'Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity, but ... this wicked hashish extinguisheth the mind, freezeth the spirit, petrifieth the soul, wasteth the body and leaveth man frustrated and lost.'"

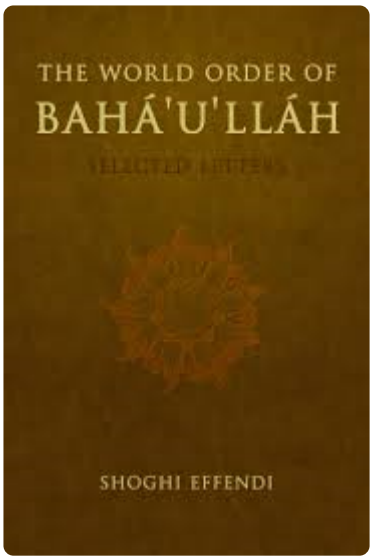
(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, November 11, 1967)

Comments

APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1933, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "AMERICA AND THE MOST GREAT PEACE", A 23-PAGE LETTER LATER INCLUDED IN "THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH".

April 21. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "America and the Most Great Peace", a 23-page letter later included in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*

In the letter, he begins by noting the various of attacks on the Bahá'í Faith. He then draws a parallel with the early histories of Christianity and Islam in describing the gravitation of Bahá'í activity "away from its cradle, to the shores of the American continent" and mentioning that the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* were addressed specifically to North American believers. He then refers to Covenant-breakers, "Thriving for a time through the devices which their scheming minds had conceived and supported by the ephemeral advantages which fame, ability or fortune can confer these notorious exponents of corruption and heresy have succeeded in protruding for a time their ugly features only to sink, as rapidly as they had risen, into the mire of an ignominious end." In the remainder of the letter Shoghi Effendi obsequiously adulates the American Bahá'í community.



Comments

APRIL 21 OR 22 (SOURCES DIFFER). ON THIS DATE IN 1863, THE BÁBIS ENTERED THE NAJIBIYYIH GARDEN IN BAGHDAD IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR JOURNEY TO ISTANBUL. BECAUSE OF INCREASING BÁBI HARASSMENT OF SHI'ITE PILGRIMS, THE QAJAR GOVERNMENT ASKED FOR THE BÁBI LEADERSHIP BASED IN BAGHDAD TO BE EXTRADITED ...

April 21 or 22 (sources differ). On this date in 1863, the Bábis entered the Najibiyyih Garden in Baghdad in preparation for their journey to Istanbul. Because of increasing Bábi harassment of Shi'ite pilgrims, the Qajar government asked for the Bábi leadership based in Baghdad to be extradited to Iran, but the Ottoman government refused and instead chose to move them from the sensitive border. In 1870, during his visit to Iraq, the Najibiyyij Garden served as a guest house for Naser al-Din Shah, who was responsible for Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment and exile. The location of the gardens today is the Baghdad Medical City, a large complex of teaching hospitals.

Comments

APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 2017, THE BWNS CARRIED AN ARTICLE TITLED "OMINOUS WAVE OF YEMEN ARRESTS RAISES ALARM" STATING "THE BASELESS AND NONSENSICAL ACCUSATIONS LEVELLED AGAINST THE BAHA'IS INCLUDE SHOWING KINDNESS AND DISPLAYING RECTITUDE OF CONDUCT IN ORDER TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO THEIR FAITH."

April 21. On this date in 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article titled "Ominous wave of Yemen arrests raises alarm" stating "The baseless and nonsensical accusations levelled against the Baha'is include showing kindness and displaying rectitude of conduct in order to attract people to their Faith."

The reasons are similar to the ones the Bahá'í Administrative Order gives for other Bahá'í persecutions. For example, *The Story of Mona:1965-1983* recounts an interrogation...

> The Assistant to the Public Prosecutor said, 'You are accused of being a member of the Zionist movement, who are spies.' In reply, I told him that Baha'is have nothing to do with politics. On the other hand, the state of Israel was founded only 32 years ago, while the Baha'i Faith was founded 139 years ago. We only have spiritual organizations which have nothing to do with politics. He said, 'There remains only one way for you, you should either recant the Faith or you will be executed.' I said I would rather be executed."

Later, in a court appearance, the book quotes a judge telling Mona, "You are accused of misleading youth with your beautiful voice and chanting."

On October 23, 1982, Mona Mahmudnizhad, being a member of the Bahá'í Education Committee, was arrested along with her father and other leading Bahá'ís of Shiraz. Mona's father was executed on March 12, 1983, and Mona was executed on June 18, 1983.

Born in 1965 to Bahá'í pioneer parents in Sana'a, Yemen, the Mahmudnizhad family returned to Iran when the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen expelled all foreigners in 1969. Mona's father, Yad'u'llah, was a Secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shiraz and in 1981 had been appointed an Auxiliary Board Member for the Province of Pars. Mona, being a member of the Bahá'í Education Committee, was arrested along with her father and other

leading Bahá'ís of Shiraz on October 23, 1982. Mona's father was executed on March 12, 1983, and Mona was executed on June 18, 1983.

The collective arrest and subsequent execution of the Shiraz Bahá'í leadership became a *cause célèbre*. Mona Mahmudnizhad herself has become the subject of several hagiographic works, including a book, *The Story of Mona:1965-1983* ; a music video, *Mona With the Children*; a play, *A Dress for Mona*; and a movie, *Mona's Dream*

Punitive sanction for thoughtcrimes, whether by civil authorities or religious hierarchies, is reprehensible. While I abhor persecution and condemn it, I am skeptical of the hagiographic perspective of the Bahá'í martyrs. There are a number of reasons for my skepticism...

(1) In the community I was a member of, even in the lifetime of Khomeini, there were Iranian Bahá'ís who would regularly travel to Iran during their summer holidays to visit family. When I would ask them how that was possible, their response was always along the lines that the arrested Bahá'ís were those who were administratively and politically active, almost to the point of referring to them as "troublemakers."

I question the degree to which simply "being Bahá'í" was and is criminalized in Iran if individual Bahá'ís could so readily travel for leisure purposes.

(2) The reasons the Bahá'í Administrative Order gives for Bahá'í persecutions lend themselves to doubt. For example, *The Story of Mona:1965-1983* recounts an interrogation...

> The Assistant to the Public Prosecutor said, 'You are accused of being a member of the Zionist movement, who are spies.' In reply, I told him that Baha'is have nothing to do with politics. On the other hand, the state of Israel was founded only 32 years ago, while the Baha'i Faith was founded 139 years ago. We only have spiritual organizations which have nothing to do with politics. He said, 'There remains only one way for you, you should either recant the Faith or you will be executed.' I said I would rather be executed."

Later, in a court appearance, the book quotes a judge telling Mona, "You are accused of misleading youth with your beautiful voice and chanting."

These reasons appear absurd, but they are not dissimilar to reasons given, for example, for the arrest of Bahá'ís in Yemen in a Bahá'í World News Service article from April 21, 2017...

> The baseless and nonsensical accusations levelled against the Baha'is include showing kindness and displaying rectitude of conduct in order to attract people to their Faith.

I question the reasons recounted for Bahá'í arrests in official publications of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

(3) As dismissive as many Bahá'ís are regarding accusations of their coreligionists' being tied to national intelligence agencies, the examples are plenty. Perhaps the most famous example that comes to mind is that of David Kelly, a Bahá'í employed by the British Ministry of Defence who served as a weapons inspector with the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, providing intelligence of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction in the lead up to the Iraq War. David Kelly's suspicious death by suicide subsequent to his appearance before the British House of Commons' Foreign Intelligence Committee in 2003 was famously investigated by the Hutton Inquiry.

Bahá'ís often lament their being associated with Zionism for no other reason than the presence of the Bahá'í World Centre in Israel, which is a coincidence resulting from Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate exile to Acre, then a prison city in Ottoman Palestine, subsequent to internecine fighting between Bahá'ís and Azalis in Adrianople.

However, the Bahá'í connection to Zionism is not merely conspiratorial.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine. This event was reported in "Star of the West" magazine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

Shoghi Effendi had a close relationship with Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. This relationship is alluded to in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, in the chapters titled *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Its Immediate Consequences* and *The Heart and Nerve Centre* As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic

land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Bahá'í Administrative Order had close relations with the new government, facilitating the acquisition of numerous properties. For example, on November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and the area around it from "the Development Authority of the State of Israel ...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners."

The Universal House of Justice has continued to have close connections with some of the most right-wing elements of the Israeli political establishment, such as [Moshe Sharon], who is Professor Emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he serves as Chair in Bahá'í Studies. Moshe Sharon holds some very extreme views.

I question the degree to which Bahá'ís are dismissive of their co-religionists' and Administrative Order's association with state actors.

I question the degree to which individual Bahá'ís may, in fact, be in the service of various national intelligence agencies.

(4) Bahá'i writings clearly forbid disobedience to one's government unless it involves the renunciation of faith. For example, Soviet policies targeted Bahá'í institutions and administrative structures. On January 1, 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later included in his seminal book *Bahá'í Administration* with sections titled "Persecutions in Russia" and "Guiding Principle of Conduct". Shoghi Effendi stated...

> the varied and numerous Bahá'í institutions established in the past by heroic pioneers of the Faith have been brought into direct and sudden contact with the internal convulsions necessitated by the establishment and maintenance of an order so fundamentally at variance with Russia's previous regime. The avowed purpose and action of the responsible heads of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who, within their recognized and legitimate rights, have emphatically proclaimed and vigorously pursued their policy of uncompromising opposition to all forms of organized religious propaganda, have by their very nature created for those whose

primary obligation is to labor unremittingly for the spread of the Bahá'í Faith a state of affairs that is highly unfortunate and perplexing...

our Bahá'í brethren in those provinces have had to endure the rigid application of the principles already enunciated by the state authorities and universally enforced with regard to all other religious communities under their sway. Faithful to their policy of expropriating in the interests of the State all edifices and monuments of a religious character, they have a few months ago approached the Bahá'í representatives in Turkistan, and after protracted negotiations with them, decided to claim and enforce their right of ownership and control of that most cherished and universally prized Bahá'í possession, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqábád...

To these measures which the State, in the free exercise of its legitimate rights, has chosen to enforce, and with which the Bahá'ís, as befits their position as loyal and law-abiding citizens, have complied, others have followed which though of a different character are none the less grievously affecting our beloved Cause. In Baku, the seat of the Soviet Republic of Caucasus, as well as in Ganjih and other neighboring towns, state orders, orally and in writing, have been officially communicated to the Bahá'í Assemblies and individual believers, suspending all meetings, commemoration gatherings and festivals, suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds and the transmission of financial contributions to any center within or without Soviet jurisdiction, requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the deliberations, decisions, plans and action of the Bahá'í Assemblies, dissolving young men's clubs and children's organizations, imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies, directing a minute investigation of Assemblies' papers and documents, suspending all Bahá'í periodicals, bulletins and magazines, and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies...

To all these the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have with feelings of burning agony and heroic fortitude unanimously and unreservedly submitted, ever mindful of the guiding principles of Bahá'í conduct that in connection with their administrative activities, no matter how grievously interference with them might affect the course of the extension of the Movement, and the suspension of which does not constitute in itself a departure from the principle of loyalty to their Faith, the considered judgment and authoritative decrees issued by their responsible rulers

> must, if they be faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's express injunctions, be thoroughly respected and loyally obeyed...
>
> Clinging with immovable resolution to the inviolable verities of their cherished Faith, our sorely-tried brethren in Caucasus and Turkistan have none the less, as befits law-abiding Bahá'í citizens resolved, after having exhausted every legitimate means for the alleviation of the restrictions imposed upon them, to definitely uphold and conscientiously carry out the considered judgment of their recognized government.

I question why obedience to one's government, particularly in terms of disestablishing the Bahá'í administrative hierarchy and halting teaching activities, was readily acquiesced to in the past in the Soviet Union but resisted in more modern times in Iran and Yemen.

(5) The Bahá'í Administrative Order uses news stories of persecution very astutely to generate media attention. A Google News search for the term "Bahá'í" shows a predominance of news stories regarding Bahá'í temples and discrimination. Otherwise, the Bahá'í Faith generates little to no interest.

Shoghi Effendi himself realized the degree of media attention generated by the construction of the Chicago Temple. In a letter dated June 13, 1956 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, he stated...

> Repercussions of the Chicago Temple are felt everywhere, and the same is becoming increasingly true of the Shrine. One single edifice, raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh, shines like a beacon and attracts the hearts of the people; no doubt many seeds are sown just through the act of people visiting these edifices - seeds which in the future will germinate. It is because of this that he is very eager to have the Australian one commenced as soon as circumstances permit.

I question the degree to which stories of Bahá'í persecution are used to generate media attention.

(6) Despite their rightly condemning persecution for belief, what is further interesting to me, given my past, is the degree to which the Bahá'í Administrative Order itself roots out dissent within its own ranks. Without going into further detail, I will refer you to two articles by Juan Cole, one entitled *The Baha'i Faith in America as Panopticon, 1963-1997* and the other titled *Fundamentalism in the Contemporary U.S. Baha'i Community*.

I question what form and magnitude this behavior would take if the Bahá'í Faith ever became, as Shoghi Effendi described...

> the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power...will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future super-state.

Comments

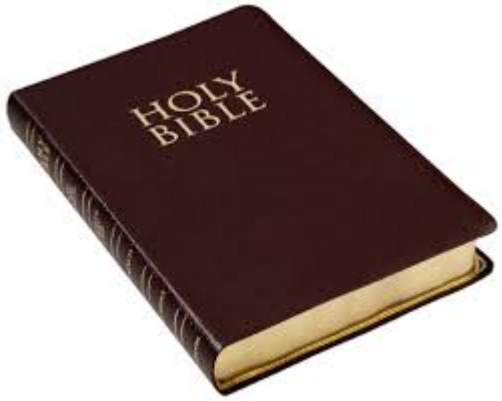
APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE PASSAGE IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN 14:26, IS A REFERENCE TO THE REVELATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, THROUGH WHOSE COMING THIS PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED."

April 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote (also here) "The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26, is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."

> 1578. Reference in Gospel of St. John to Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh
>
> "The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26, is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

also here

> 1657. Reference to Bahá'u'lláh in St. John
>
> "The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26 is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)



Comments

APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE WORD ISRAEL, USED THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE, SIMPLY REFERS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND NOT TO THE CHOSEN ONES OF THIS DAY."

April 21. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The word Israel, used throughout the Bible, simply refers to the Jewish people, and not to the chosen ones of this day."

> 1674. Israel
>
> "The word Israel, used throughout the Bible, simply refers to the Jewish people, and not to the chosen ones of this day."
>
> (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

Comments

APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1963, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WAS ELECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.

Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

APRIL 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, THE ARAB VILLAGE OF AL-SAMRA, WHERE ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ HAD OWNED LAND AND GROWN GRAIN, WAS DEPOPULATED IN THE FIGHTING WHICH BROKE OUT AFTER THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ADOPTION OF THE PARTITION PLAN FOR PALESTINE.

April 21. On this date in 1948, the Arab village of al-Samra, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption on November 29, 1947 of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

Al-Samra (transliterated as as Samrih in the Bahá'í orthography) is mentioned in Lady Blomfield's *The Chosen Highway*, in the sectioned titled *Bahá'í Villages*.

> The Master bought from time to time some land in various villages. Asfiya and Daliya, near Haifa--these two properties He bestowed upon Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah, the two younger half-brothers, at the request of Bahá'u'lláh.
>
> Land was also acquired in the villages of Samrih, Nughayb, and 'Adasiyyih, situated near the Jordan.

In his book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, the historian Walid Khalidi details the history of many of these Palestinian villages and how they were depopulated. For example, he notes that in the 1880s most of the village land of al-Samra was purchased by Bahá'u'lláh, with the villagers continuing to farm as tenant farmers. In the 1920s, this land was sold by Shoghi Effendi to the Jewish National Fund.

Bahá'í Villages in *The Chosen Highway* chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the grain he had grown in these villages to supply the British Army during World War I.

> We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master.
>
> "I have corn," was the reply.
>
> "But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.
>
> "I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

> He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]

According to Harry Charles Luke, an official in the British Colonial Office who served as assistant Governor of Jerusalem,

> Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation.

On April 27, 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ceremonially knighted, an event which was prominently reported in the Bahá'í periodical *Star of the West*.

> THE following beautiful description of this event was written by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi who was at that time in Haifa: "Among the kings and governments of the world who have become convinced that Abdul Bahá was the well-wisher and the lover of mankind are King George and his government. The King sent a medal to Abdul Bahá with the title, "Sir", thus making him a member of his household. On the 27th of April, 1920, the Governor and high officials of Haifa, Palestine presented in a beautiful garden **a most wonderful celebration for the knighting of Abdul Baha.** Bahai pilgrims from Persia, America and all parts of the world were present. Mohammedan, Christian, Jewish leaders, clergymen, notables and local officials from Haifa, Acca and other towns attended. A tent was pitched in the center of the garden. **English troops stood on both sides, from the gate of the garden to the center where Abdul Bahá was seated.** The military music added wonderful melody to the rustling leaves of the beautiful trees. The breezes of the spring on that sunny afternoon imparted a remarkable vigor to the physical body just as the presence of Abdul Baha strengthened the souls. The Governor stood behind Abdul Bahá and, after a short speech, interpreted by Mr. Wadie Bistani, presented the medal. Then Abdul Baha, rising from his seat, gave a brief talk and a prayer for the British government.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "Thereis too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi was matriculated at Balliol College. In a letter to Marzieh Gail, Shoghi Effendi outlined his educational ambitions at Balliol College, specifically to study with eminent professors and Orientalists, noting alumni who were all Imperialists.

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi would continue to have close relations with the leading political administrators and prominent Zionist leaders. For example, on January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people." Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

> While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:
>
> > Dear Mr. Rabbani,
> >
> > I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.

Yours sincerely, Herbert Samuel

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1998, THE ITC WROTE A LETTER STRESSING "THE VITAL ROLE THAT COUNSELLORS CAN PLAY IN STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITIES TO RESIST INTERNAL OPPOSITION. THIS RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDES IDENTIFYING PROMISING YOUNG MINDS, ENCOURAGING THEIR SCHOLARSHIP, AND PROVIDING THEM WITH..."

April 22. On this date in 1998, the International Teaching Centre wrote a letter stressing "the vital role that Counsellors can play in strengthening the communities to resist internal opposition. This responsibility includes identifying promising young minds, encouraging their scholarship, and providing them with guidance in their study of the Writings. Parallel to this is the ever-present duty of the Counsellors and Board members to utilize evidences of opposition as opportunities for the friends to deepen their faith in the nature and power of the Covenant."

Letter from the International Teaching Centre...

> Our letter of 22 April 1998 stresses the vital role that Counsellors can play in strengthening the communities to resist internal opposition. This responsibility includes identifying promising young minds, encouraging their scholarship, and providing them with guidance in their study of the Writings. Parallel to this is the ever-present duty of the Counsellors and Board members to utilize evidences of opposition as opportunities for the friends to deepen their faith in the nature and power of the Covenant.

Comments

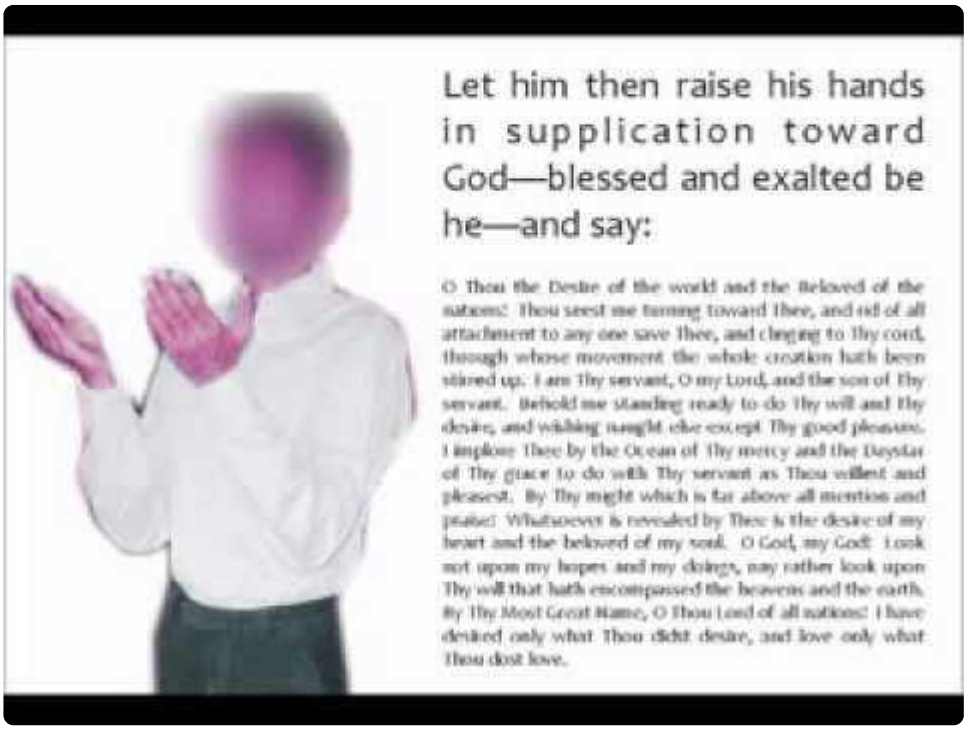
Anonymous: Did they listen? Hopefully!

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1991, THE UHJ STATED THAT, IN FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTION "LET HIM THEN RAISE HIS HANDS, AND REPEAT THREE TIMES THE GREATEST NAME", THE BELIEVER IS REQUIRED TO RAISE HIS HANDS ONCE AND TO REPEAT THE GREATEST NAME THREE TIMES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT ACT..."

April 22. On this date in 1991, the Universal House of Justice stated that, in following the instruction "Let him then raise his hands, and repeat three times the Greatest Name", the believer is required to raise his hands once and to repeat the Greatest Name three times in conjunction with that act. In relation to the second and third occasions, the Research Department has not, to date, been able to locate any specific guidance. It is, however, informative to consider the wording of the instructions:

"Let him then repeat the Greatest Name thrice, and bend down with hands resting on the knees, and say..." "Let him then repeat the Greatest Name thrice, and kneel with his forehead to the ground, and say..."

In contrast to the first occasion where the raising of the hands forms part of the explicit instructions, in the second and third instances no mention is made of raising the hands.


Let him then raise his hands in supplication toward God—blessed and exalted be he—and say:
O Thou the Desire of the world and the Beloved of the nations! Thou seest me turning toward Thee, and rid of all attachment to any one save Thee, and clinging to Thy cord, through whose movement the whole creation hath been stirred up. I am Thy servant, O my Lord, and the son of Thy servant. Behold me standing ready to do Thy will and Thy desire, and wishing naught else except Thy good pleasure. I implore Thee by the Ocean of Thy mercy and the Daystar of Thy grace to do with Thy servant as Thou willest and pleasest. By Thy might which is far above all mention and praise! Whatsoever is revealed by Thee is the desire of my heart and the beloved of my soul. O God, my God! Look not upon my hopes and my doings, nay rather look upon Thy will that hath encompassed the heavens and the earth. By Thy Most Great Name, O Thou Lord of all nations! I have desired only what Thou didst desire, and love only what Thou dost love.

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 2013, THE UHJ WROTE A LETTER TO AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER, HAVING RECEIVED EMAILS "DESCRIBING YOUR STRUGGLE TO RECONCILE THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS WITH YOUR OWN VIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY, WHICH HAVE EVOLVED AS YOU HAVE REFLECTED ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SON."

April 22. On this date in 2013, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to an individual believer, having received emails "describing your struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings with your own views on homosexuality, which have evolved as you have reflected on your relationship with your son." The Universal House of Justice notes "The understanding about human beings today is heavily influenced by materialistic assumptions. Perspectives of social movements, leaders of thought, and the media are shaped by them. Even the findings of science are interpreted according to such prevalent cultural notions. It is not surprising, then, that there are many ideas about human identity and behaviour in contemporary society commonly accepted as truths that conflict with the Bahá'í teachings."

It should be noted some of the choice words stated about homosexuality by Shoghi Effendi...

•"Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is **spiritually condemned.**"

•"A number of **sexual problems** such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the **best medical assistance.** But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a **distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome.**"

•"To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can **overcome this handicap.**"

And later by the Universal House of Justice...

•"A homosexual relationship **subverts the purpose of human life** and that determined effort to overcome the **wayward tendencies** which promote this practice which, like other sexual vices, is so abhorrent; the Creator of all mankind will help you both to return to a path that leads to true happiness."

•"Man's physical existence on this earth is a period during which the moral exercise of his free will is tried and tested in order to prepare his soul for the other worlds of God, and we must welcome **affliction and tribulations** as opportunities for improvement in our eternal selves."

Among his numerous talks to American believers, Abu'l-Qásim Faizi touched on the topic of homosexuality. Abu'l-Qásim Faizi was a Hand of the Cause of God who studied at the American University of Beirut where he was good friends with Munib Shahid.

> Transcript: Beloved friends, we are living at the end of all ages. We are living at a time when an old civilization is dying, and parts of it are dead. It is dead and as a dead body **the stinking smells of a dead corpse is spread everywhere.** There are all these problems that are asked by the youth are these stinking smells of this dead body of civilization, and one of them is this problem. Bahá'u'lláh says **"my pen is ashamed to mention it."** Now see how corrupted the world is that **even in a Baha'i community somebody asked it,** mentions it. Bahá'u'lláh says his pen is ashamed to mention it. **This shows how degraded humanity is, into what a pitfall man has fallen, and how they have lost all standards all levels of life to them.** Now we must come together as I said at the beginning. We must be closer to each other. More in love with each other so that we form a great magnet. That magnet will attract all the people around you, and by coming into that atmosphere of the Bahá'í Faith they will forget their childish thoughts. All their problems will dissolve. The beloved Guardian had been asked about this. He said **refer to competent physicians. This is curable. It means it is a disease not something natural. Absolutely unnatural.**

Abu'l-Qásim Faizi's reference to Shoghi Effendi's calling homosexuality a disease rests on several sources, such as a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer on March 26, 1950, which referred to homosexual acts as "wrong," adding that "through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap."

> 1223. Through Advice, Help of Doctors, and Prayer, Can Overcome This Handicap
>
> "No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse.

Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and homosexual relationships he looks upon as such, besides being against nature.

"To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap.

"God judges each soul on its own merits. The Guardian cannot tell you what the attitude of God would be towards a person who lives a good life in most ways, but not in this way. All he can tell you is that it is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and that one so afflicted should struggle and struggle again to overcome it. We must be hopeful of God's Mercy but not impose upon it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 26, 1950)

Need for sympathy for those with a homosexual orientation and their need for struggle to overcome

by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice

2013-04-22

22 April 2013

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letters of 11 March 2011 and 5 May 2012 describing your struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings with your own views on homosexuality, which have evolved as you have reflected on your relationship with your son. We have been asked to convey to you the following and in so doing express our regret that, owing to the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre and the time necessary to carefully consider the many facets of your heartfelt questions, our reply has been so long delayed. The House of Justice appreciates the candour with which you have expressed your concerns, and your earnest desire to comprehend aspects of the teachings more fully is warmly acknowledged.

The understanding about human beings today is heavily influenced by materialistic assumptions. Perspectives of social movements, leaders of thought, and the media are shaped by them. Even the findings of science are interpreted according to such prevalent cultural notions. It is not surprising, then, that there are many ideas about human identity and behaviour in contemporary

society commonly accepted as truths that conflict with the Bahá'í teachings. Yet, as Bahá'u'lláh asks every thoughtful soul, "Where shalt thou secure the cord of thy faith and fasten the tie of thine obedience?" His answer, revealed in innumerable passages, is, as you know, unambiguous. "The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind." "No man, however acute his perception," He affirms, "can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained." And He counsels not to weigh "the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men", and in "this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed…." The Manifestation institutes His laws and ordinances in accordance with His intrinsic knowledge of human reality and His intended aims for individual and collective transformation. From a Bahá'í perspective, then, it is the teachings of the Manifestation of God that clarify the essential elements of human identity.

In contrast to many contemporary conceptions, the Bahá'í teachings maintain that a person must rise above certain material aspects of human nature to develop and manifest inherent spiritual qualities that characterize his or her true self. The Sacred Texts contain laws and exhortations that, in many instances, redirect or restrict behaviours that arise from impulses, tendencies, and desires, whether inborn or acquired. Some of these are physical, while others are emotional or psychological. Yet, whatever their origin, it is through their regulation and control that the higher, spiritual nature is able to predominate and flourish. Those who are not Bahá'ís may have no cause to take into account such considerations. A Bahá'í, however, cannot set aside the implications of these teachings and must endeavour to respond to the best of his or her ability, though it be little by little and day by day. In so doing, all believers face challenges, although the specific type or extent of a test may differ. They act with faith in Bahá'u'lláh's declaration, "Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures", and they respond to His call, "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty."

You have suggested that homosexuals could be made to feel as though they are "on the edges of society" and "inherently deficient", which would drive them away from the Faith. Such an outcome would be antithetical to the Bahá'í teachings. It may be reassuring to you to know that Shoghi Effendi has stated, in letters written on his behalf, that a Bahá'í who has a homosexual orientation must strive daily to come closer to the Bahá'í standard and, in this process, should be treated with tolerance and receive help, advice, and sympathy; he also acknowledges that such an inclination can be "a great burden to a conscientious soul" and states that those concerned should "adhere to their Faith, and not withdraw from active service, because of the tests they

experience" since, "in one way or another, we are all tested; and this must strengthen us, not weaken us." Whatever the particular challenge he or she may face, through the recognition of Bahá'u'lláh and steadfast effort to abide by His teachings and to serve humanity, every believer can have a rich and rewarding Bahá'í life.

Although they affirm their conviction that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reflect God's purpose for humankind in this Day, Bahá'ís do not seek to impose their values on others. They do not pass judgement on others on the basis of their own moral standards and can never presume to know the standing of any soul in the eyes of God. Rather, the friends are enjoined to show forth unconditional love, to engage in fellowship with all, and to be forbearing, concerned with their own shortcomings and not those of others. They are to have a sin-covering eye, focusing on good qualities and ignoring the bad, and they must eschew backbiting and gossip. As the Bahá'í community continues to grow and develop, increasing its involvement with the wider society, such characteristics will become more pronounced and a hallmark of Bahá'í culture. Given this, to regard those with a homosexual orientation with prejudice or disdain, the House of Justice has repeatedly emphasized, would be entirely against the spirit of the Faith. In response to your question about the position a Bahá'í would take in relation to supporting the human rights of homosexuals, we have enclosed a copy of a letter dated 27 October 2010 written on behalf of the House of Justice to an individual believer that discusses this topic, and it is hoped the guidance contained therein will allay any concern you may have.

As to the possibility of same-sex marriage within the Faith, according to the teachings, Bahá'í marriage is a union between a man and a woman. This is set forth in the Writings and is not susceptible to change by the House of Justice.

You have also asked how you should deal with the conflict you face in being a Bahá'í while struggling to appreciate certain aspects of the teachings, and you wonder whether you should withdraw from the Faith or simply acknowledge that on this point you have a different view. It can be helpful to consider that, on occasion, a believer may discover that a personal understanding differs to some degree from the teachings. How can it be otherwise, when our conceptions are forged in a social milieu that Bahá'u'lláh has come to radically transform? "An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust," Shoghi Effendi reminds us, "is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds." A sensible approach is simply to recognize that the human mind is both finite and fallible and that acquiring spiritual insight and greater understanding is a gradual and ever-unfolding process that requires time, continued study, reflection on action, and consultation with others. This perspective is quite different, however, from contending with or attempting to

change explicit provisions of the Faith. Humility is required, rather than an insistence that one's personal views at any given time are correct. Thus, there is no reason why you should feel a need to withdraw from the Bahá'í community. Rather you are encouraged to keep an open mind and acknowledge, like every other Bahá'í, that there are elements of the Revelation that you are striving to understand more fully. This does not prevent you from showing forth unconditional love and support for your son.

You are assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that you and your son may be the recipients of heavenly blessings and bestowals.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ GAVE A TALK AT THE HOME OF MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR J. PARSONS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., STARTING WITH "SEE HOW GOOD BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS TO US, HOW GREAT THE POWER OF HIS WORD! FROM WHAT DISTANT PARTS OF THE WORLD HE HAS BROUGHT US TOGETHER IN THIS HOUSE AND ..."

April 22. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons in Washington, D.C., starting with "See how good Bahá'u'lláh is to us, how great the power of His Word! From what distant parts of the world He has brought us together in this house and caused us to meet at this heavenly table, for love has prepared a feast and bidden `Abdu'l-Bahá to let this entertainment be in His name. What a union of hearts and what a confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh between East and West has been established! How His bounty has embraced all! How His favors have been perfected for all! "

April 22. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons in Washington, D.C.,

> See how good Bahá'u'lláh is to us, how great the power of His Word! From what distant parts of the world He has brought us together in this house and caused us to meet at this heavenly table, for love has prepared a feast and bidden `Abdu'l-Bahá to let this entertainment be in His name. What a union of hearts and what a confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh between East and West has been established! How His bounty has embraced all! How His favors have been perfected for all!
>
> When the Muslims conquered Persia, the chief of the Zoroastrian high priests went to drink wine. According to Muslim law wine is forbidden, and he who drinks it must be punished by eighty-one strokes of the whip. Therefore, the Muslims arrested the high priest and whipped him. At that time the Arabs were considered very low and degraded by the Persians, scarcely to be accounted as human beings. As Muhammad was an Arab, the Persians looked upon Him with disdain; but when the high priest saw the evidences of a power in Muhammad which controlled these despised people, he cried out, "O thou Arabian Muhammad, what hast thou done? What hast thou done which has made thy people arrest the chief high priest of the Zoroastrians for committing something unlawful in thy religion?" By this

circumstance the prejudice which caused the Zoroastrian to shun the Muslim had been overcome, for he recognized in what had happened to him the great influence Muhammad exercised over these people.

Today in this meeting we have an evidence of how Bahá'u'lláh through the power of the love of God has exercised a wonderful spiritual influence throughout the world. From the remotest parts of Persia and the Orient He has caused men to come to this table to meet with the people of the West in the utmost love and affection, union and harmony. Behold how the power of Bahá'u'lláh has brought the East and West together. And `Abdu'l-Bahá is standing, serving you. There is neither rod nor blow, whip nor sword; but the power of the love of God has accomplished this.

In this world we judge a cause or movement by its progress and development. Some movements appear, manifest a brief period of activity, then discontinue. Others show forth a greater measure of growth and strength, but before attaining mature development, weaken, disintegrate and are lost in oblivion. Neither of these mentioned are progressive and permanent.

There is still another kind of movement or cause which from a very small, inconspicuous beginning goes forward with sure and steady progress, gradually broadening and widening until it has assumed universal dimensions. The Bahá'í Movement is of this nature. For instance, when Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Persia with `Abdu'l-Bahá and the rest of His family, they traveled the long road from Tihrán to Baghdád, passing through many towns and villages. During the whole of that journey and distance they did not meet a single believer in the Cause for which they had been banished. At that time very little was known about it in any part of the world. Even in Baghdád there was but one believer who had been taught by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in Persia. Later on, two or three others appeared. You will see, therefore, that at the beginning the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was almost unknown, but on account of being a divine Movement it grew and developed with irresistible spiritual power until in this day, wherever you travel-- East or West--and in whatever country you journey, you will meet Bahá'í assemblies and institutions. This is an evidence that the Bahá'ís are spreading the blessings of unity and progressive development throughout the world under the direction of divine guidance and purpose, while other movements which are only temporary in their activities and accomplishments have no real, universal significance.

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "BAHA'U'LLAH ESTABLISHED HIS FAITH IN PERSIA – THE MOST DECADENT NATION ON EARTH. THE PERSIANS WERE MORE BARBAROUS THAN THE SAVAGES OF AFRICA."

April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "Baha'u'llah established His Faith in Persia – the most decadent nation on earth. The Persians were more barbarous than the savages of Africa."

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "... THE TWO-THIRDS OF THE EARTH'S POPULATION SPOKE OF IN THE BIBLE WILL BE ANNIHILATED...THE WORLD IS OVER-POPULATED, AND THE BLOOD OF THE PEOPLE IS IMPURE. THE RETRIBUTIVE CALAMITY WILL CORRECT OVER-POPULATION PROBLEM THIS TIME."

April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "It is quite possible that the two-thirds of the earth's population spoke of in the Bible will be annihilated. This is quite possible. The world is over-populated, and the blood of the people is impure. The retributive calamity will correct over-population problem this time."

Comments

Sertorius126: In unofficial pilgrim notes? Correct.In authentic writings? No.

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "A RETRIBUTIVE CALAMITY WHICH WILL BE WORSE THAN WAR WILL COME. IT WILL APPEAR SUDDENLY – NOT BY DEGREES...KAMPALA WILL BE SAFE – SO LONG AS THEY DON'T BUILD AMERICAN AIR BASES IN KENYA. THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HIMALAYAS MOUNTAINS WILL ALSO BE SAFE."

April 22. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "A retributive calamity which will be worse than war will come. It will appear suddenly – not by degrees...Kampala will be safe – so long as they don't build American air bases in Kenya. The foothills of the Himalayas Mountains will also be safe."

Comments

APRIL 22. ON THIS DATE IN 2018, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD NEWS SERVICE CARRIED AN ARTICLE ANNOUNCING THE RETIREMENT OF GUSTAVO CORREA AND FIRAYDOUN JAVAHERI FROM THE UHJ. THE SUBSEQUENT ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED APRIL 30 WERE EASILY PREDICTABLY, AND ANDREJ DONOVAL WILL BE THE NEXT MEMBER ELECTED TO THE UHJ

April 22. On this date in 2018, the Bahá'í World News Service carried an article announcing the retirement of Gustavo Correa and Firaydoun Javaheri from the Universal House of Justice. The subsequent election results announced April 30 were easily predictably, and Andrej Donoval will be the next member elected to the Universal House of Justice.

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate

participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the

International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Gustavo Correa is the husband of Haleh Arbab and brother-in-law of Farzam Arbab. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice in 2008, Correa was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

Born in Tehran, Iran on October 27, 1941, **Farzam Arbab** would go on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College in 1964 and a Doctor of Philosophy in physics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1968. Shortly after earning his doctorate, Arbab moved to Colombia where he quickly established himself in the leadership in the Bahá'í community of that country and by 1970 was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. While in Colombia he helped found Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC).

Initially elected in 1993 to the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, Farzam Arbab retired from that body in 2013. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 1988, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith. All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In 1980 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in the Americas, on which he served for eight years. From 1970 until 1980 he served as the Chairman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia. In 1980, while still a Counsellor, Arbab was on the initial board of directors for the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í School in Haiti.

Farzam Arbab's son, **Paul Arbab**, is administrator at the Luxembourg-based Unity Foundation, which works with Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and "a network of local development agencies assisting them in their efforts to build capacity amongst populations to take charge of their own social and economic development." "Born in the US, Paul grew up in Colombia. He holds an MBA and joined the board of Unity Foundation in January 2007. Since then he has been able to provide valuable input to the strategic direction of the Foundation. He is a proud father of two toddlers and strongly believes in the power of education." Unity Foundation is "governed by a board of directors which regularly meets to consult on the strategic direction of the organization. The day-to-day work is being carried out by the office team. Our external consultancy body, the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) in Haifa, Israel connects us to grass-root development agencies which have the capacity to work with external funding organization. OSED and the [Luxembourg] Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as two filters ensuring the quality and integrity of our projects."

Farzam Arbab's sister, **Haleh Arbab**, is currently director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a non-profit educational and research organization "dedicated to building capacity in individuals, groups and institutions to contribute to prevalent discourses concerned with the betterment of society" through "working in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community." Born in Iran and educated in the United States, Haleh Arbab previously lived in Colombia from 1982 to 2005 where she worked with the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC) and served as Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural, a Colombian Bahá'í-inspired institute she helped found in 1988.

Farzam Arbab's brother-in-law, Haleh Arbab's husband, is **Gustavo Correa** who himself has been a member of the Universal House of Justice since 2008. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 2005, Correa was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

Farzam Arab's niece, **Bita Correa**, is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. Aside from being FUNDAEC's current program director, Bita Correa participated as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development. A recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, Bita Correa is the daughter of Haleh Arbab, Farzam Arbab's sister, and Gustavo Correa.

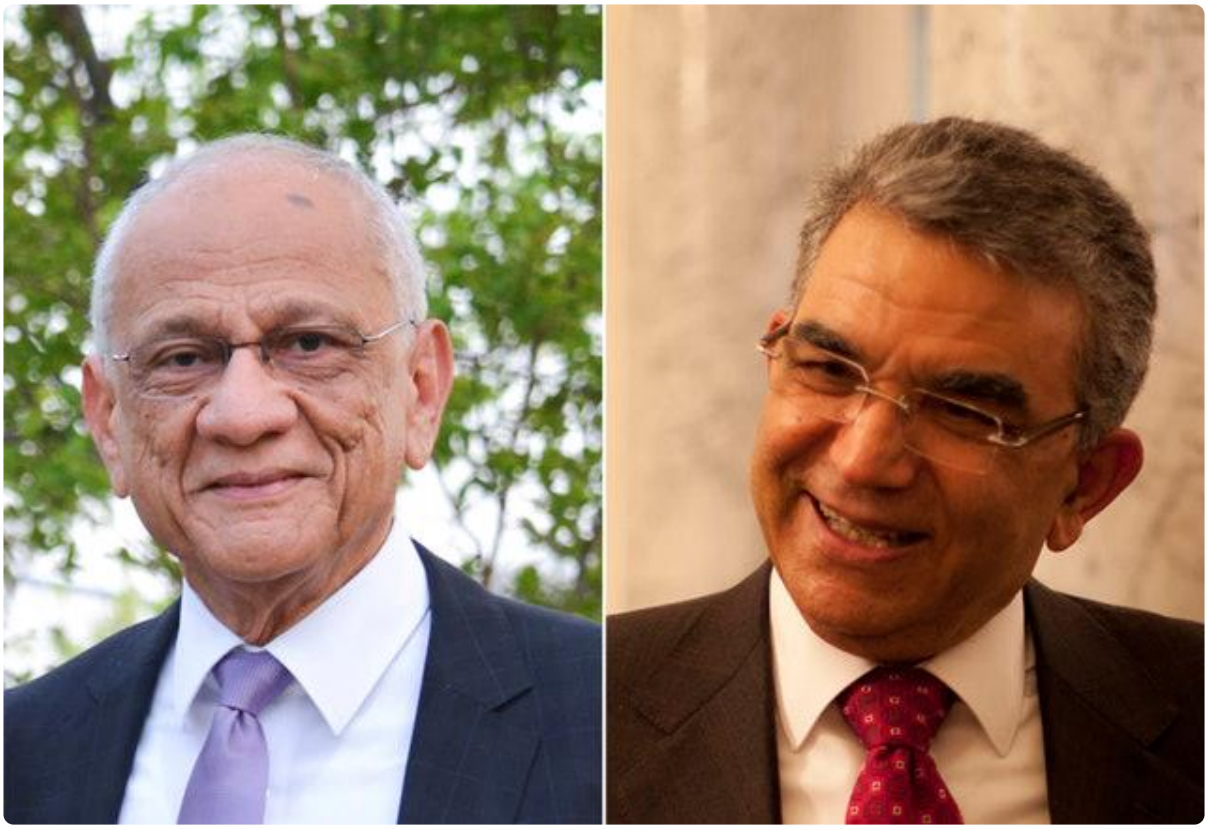
Farzam Arbab was one of the founders of FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences). He served as its Director from 1974 through 1988 and continues to serve on its board. FUNDAEC was established in 1974 by a group of professors at the University of Valle in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country. In 2002, the Club of Budapest recognized FUNDAEC's new rural education model. The model, known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, Spanish for "System for Tutorial Learning") started in 1980 and centers on the use of interactive workbooks facilitated by a tutor. In Colombia, these tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education.

The SAT techniques Arbab helped develop at FUNDAEC have been applied to the Bahá'í community in the form of the Ruhi Institute, which was named after Arbab's father. Centered on Bahá'í study circles, the goal of the Ruhi Institute courses is to "evoke a transformative learning experience through a learner-centered, experiential, and collaborative approach facilitated by a tutor rather than an instructor, a teacher, or an expert." Among the principles of the Ruhi curriculum is the utilization of service projects to implement learning into tangible action.

The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the emulation of the Ruhi model throughout the global Bahá'í community. According to one researcher, the Ruhi Institute's method has resulted in "nonhierarchical, self-initiated, self-organized small groups engaged in study, teaching, and action" and is "becoming the core of Bahá'í community life worldwide as the outcome of a process that has sought to nurture the spiritual life of individuals and families and to establish social foundations for the vision and practice of religious world citizenship." Paul Lample, another member of the Universal Hose of Justice, has stated "Doubtless the institute and its curriculum will continue to evolve, both in content and form, to a level of greater complexity in regions and nations within the framework of the administrative order throughout the various stages of the Divine Plan in the second century of the Formative Age."

For a number of years now, Unity Foundation has collaborated with FUNDAEC and "since June 2013, Unity Foundation has renewed its collaboration with FUNDAEC."

On September 25, 2020, Farzam Arbab [died](https://news.bahai.org/story/1453/



Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1999, THE UHJ WROTE A LETTER ELABORATING ON THEIR APRIL 7 LETTER TITLED "ISSUES RELATED TO THE STUDY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH" NOTING "A CAMPAIGN OF INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO THE TEACHINGS IS CURRENTLY BEING CARRIED ON THROUGH THE USE OF THE INTERNET, A COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM..."

April 23. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter elaborating on their April 7 letter titled "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" (also here) noting "a campaign of internal opposition to the Teachings is currently being carried on through the use of the Internet, a communications system that now reaches virtually every part of the world. Differing from attacks familiar in the past, it seeks to recast the entire Faith into a sociopolitical ideology alien to Bahá'u'lláh's intent."

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> Department of the Secretariat
>
> 7 April 1999
>
> To all National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends,
>
> *Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith*
>
> In May of 1998, Bahá'í Canada reproduced a collection of letters which the Universal House of Justice had written to various individuals on the subject of the academic study of the Bahá'í Faith. Copies of this compilation were subsequently mailed by the Canadian National Spiritual Assembly to its sister Assemblies. The reprint has now been made generally available in booklet form by the United States Bahá'í Publishing Trust. The House of Justice has asked us to forward you a copy of the latter publication with the following comments.
>
> As a number of the friends are aware, a campaign of internal opposition to the Teachings is currently being carried on through the use of the Internet, a communications system that now reaches virtually every part of the world. Differing from attacks familiar in the past, it seeks to recast the entire Faith into a

sociopolitical ideology alien to Bahá'u'lláh's intent. In the place of the institutional authority established by His Covenant, it promotes a kind of interpretive authority which those behind it attribute to the views of persons technically trained in Middle East studies.

Early in 1996, the deliberate nature of the plan was revealed in an accidental posting to an Internet list which Bahá'í subscribers had believed was dedicated to scholarly exploration of the Cause. Some of the people responsible resigned from the Faith when Counselors pointed out to them the direction their activities were taking. A small number of others continue to promote the campaign within the Bahá'í community.

In the past, in situations of a somewhat similar nature, the patience and compassion shown by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian helped various believers who had been misled by ill-intentioned persons to eventually free themselves from such entanglements. In this same spirit of forbearance the Universal House of Justice has intervened in the current situation only to the extent that has been unavoidable, trusting to the good sense and the goodwill of the believers involved to awaken to the spiritual dangers to which they are exposing themselves. Nevertheless, certain Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies are monitoring the problem closely, and the friends can be confident that whatever further steps are needed to protect the integrity of the Cause will be taken.

As passages in the enclosed reprint make clear, this campaign of internal opposition—while purporting to accept the legitimacy of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as twin successors of Bahá'u'lláh and the Center of His Covenant—attempts to cast doubt on the nature and scope of the authority conferred on them in the Writings. When other Bahá'ís have pointed out that such arguments contradict explicit statements of the Master, persons behind the scheme have responded by calling into question the soundness of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own judgment and perspective. Gradually, these arguments have exposed the view of those involved that Bahá'u'lláh Himself was not the voice of God to our age but merely a particularly enlightened moral philosopher, one whose primary concern was to reform existing society.

By itself, such opposition would likely stand little chance of influencing reasonably informed Bahá'ís. As one of the letters in the enclosed reprint (20 July 1997) points

out, the scheme relies for effect, therefore, on exploiting the confusion created in modern thought by the reigning doctrines of materialism. Although the reality of God's continuous relationship with His creation and His intervention in human life and history are the very essence of the teachings of the Founders of the revealed religions, dogmatic materialism today insists that even the nature of religion itself can be adequately understood only through the use of an academic methodology designed to ignore the truths that make religion what it is.

In general, the strategy being pursued has been to avoid direct attacks on the Faith's Central Figures. The effort, rather, has been to sow the seeds of doubt among believers about the Faith's teachings and institutions by appealing to unexamined prejudices that Bahá'ís may have unconsciously absorbed from non-Bahá'í society. In defiance of the clear interpretation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, for example, Bahá'u'lláh's limiting of membership on the Universal House of Justice to men is misrepresented as merely a "temporary measure" subject to eventual revision if sufficient pressure is brought to bear. Similarly, Shoghi Effendi's explanation of Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth that will unite spiritual and civil authority is dismissed in favor of the assertion that the modern political concept of "separation of church and state" is somehow one that Bahá'u'lláh intended as a basic principle of the World Order He has founded. Particularly subtle is an attempt to suggest that the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár should evolve into a seat of quasi-doctrinal authority, parallel to and essentially independent of the Local House of Justice, which would permit various interests to insinuate themselves into the direction of the life processes of the Cause.

Typically, when misrepresentations of the kind described are challenged, the reaction of those behind the campaign has been to claim that their civil rights are being threatened, an assertion that is of course meaningless in the light of the purely voluntary nature of Bahá'í membership. Much emphasis is placed by them also on academic freedom, their view of which proves, on examination, to be merely freedom on their part to pervert scholarly discourse to the promotion of their own ideological agenda, while seeking to exclude from discussion features of the Bahá'í Faith that are central to the Writings of its Founders.

The effect of continued exposure to such insincerity about matters vital to humanity's well-being is spiritually corrosive. When we encounter minds that are closed and hearts that are darkened by evident malice, Bahá'u'lláh urges that we

leave such persons to God and turn our attention to the opportunities which multiply daily for the promotion of the truths which He teaches. In words written at the direction of the Guardian, regarding a situation similar to, though much less serious than, the present one, ". . . the friends should be advised to just leave these people alone, for their influence can be nothing but negative and destructive.…"

The enclosed material is being sent to your Assembly less out of concern over the immediate situation, which is being systematically addressed, than because of longer-term considerations to which it lends perspective. What we are currently seeing, in a relatively primitive form, is the emergence of a new kind of internal opposition to Bahá'u'lláh's Mission. While it will no doubt assume other features as time passes, it is a kind of opposition that takes aim directly at Bahá'u'lláh's assertion of the spiritual nature of reality and of humanity's dependence on the interventions of Divine Revelation.

Developments of the kind described will come as no surprise to friends who are familiar with the Guardian's description of the successive waves of "crisis" and "victory" that have marked the history of the Faith ever since its inception. It is precisely this cyclical process, Shoghi Effendi says, that has propelled the steady unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's intent, testing our commitment to His Teachings, purifying His community, and releasing a greater measure of the capacities latent in His Revelation. That resistance to Bahá'u'lláh should now be emerging in yet a new guise is itself a tribute to the gathering strength of the Cause, offering the friends everywhere new opportunities for the deepening of their faith and the energizing of their work.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Referenced here...

16 June 1999

Transmitted electronically

To all Continental Boards of Counsellors

Dearly loved Co-workers,

Further to our letter of 23 April 1999, we would like to draw your attention to a few themes in the letter of 7 April 1999 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies on the subject of internal opposition, which may warrant added reflection as you carry out your sacred responsibility of protecting the Cause of God. The letter from the House of Justice reaffirms the important role the Continental Counsellors play in being attentive to the spiritual health of the community and provides background information necessary to clarify the current situation for the friends and deepen their loyalty to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and His Covenant.

The opposition campaign on the Internet, it should be noted, is being promoted by only "a small number of Bahá'ís"; many friends engaged in these discussions are, in fact, devoted believers. As the letter of 7 April indicates, the approach of the House of Justice has been to show forbearance and to intervene only when it has been unavoidable. We would encourage the Counsellors to follow this example and, in the spirit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, to show patience and compassion when relating to Bahá'ís who may have been adversely influenced by the Internet discussions. As part of the responsibility of "diffusing the divine fragrances," you and your Auxiliary Board members and their assistants will need to make every effort to attract the friends who are troubled or disaffected back to a loving and understanding Bahá'í community life. As you are well aware, to develop an adversarial relationship with any of the friends will only create an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust that will pose far greater problems for the general community than the activities of a few misguided individuals. It is equally important for the Counsellors and their auxiliaries to foster a spirit of tolerance in the Bahá'í communities as members grow in their understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. A spirit of free inquiry should be preserved so that the friends feel comfortable asking questions within Bahá'í gatherings, such as in deepening classes or at summer schools, without fear of disapproval or alienation.

Another significant theme that is raised in both the 7 April letter and the document on "Opposition to the Cause and its use of the Internet" is the potentially harmful effect that can result from continued exposure to discussions that attack the Administrative Order. Rather than a "serious exploration of Bahá'í themes," it is reported that in certain discussion groups on the Internet one encounters derogatory and defamatory remarks against Bahá'í institutions and its members.

Counsellors may wish to advise believers engaged in these discussions to ponder earnestly the counsel from the Universal House of Justice that to continue dialogue with those who have shown a fixed antagonism to the Faith, and have demonstrated their imperviousness to any ideas other than their own, is usually fruitless and, for the Bahá'ís who take part, can be burdensome and even spiritually corrosive.

Our letter of 22 April 1998 stresses the vital role that Counsellors can play in strengthening the communities to resist internal opposition. This responsibility includes identifying promising young minds, encouraging their scholarship, and providing them with guidance in their study of the Writings. Parallel to this is the ever-present duty of the Counsellors and Board members to utilize evidences of opposition as opportunities for the friends to deepen their faith in the nature and power of the Covenant.

We encourage all the Boards of Counsellors to study the 7 April 1999 letter at their upcoming plenary meetings. The degree to which the issues discussed in the letter affect different national communities will, of course, vary. With this in mind, we leave it to your discretion whether you feel it would be beneficial, subsequent to your meeting, to arrange for a consultation on the letter with the National Spiritual Assemblies you serve and with the Auxiliary Board members. In all cases, we would encourage the Counsellors to become thoroughly familiar with the publication "Issues Related to the Study of the Bahá'í Faith" and utilize it in their training of Auxiliary Board members and their assistants.

We are confident that you will recognize in the current circumstances fresh opportunities for discharging your important responsibilities of promoting and edifying the souls of the believers. May Bahá'u'lláh bless and sustain you in your high endeavors.With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The International Teaching Centrecc: The Hands of the Cause of God

Comments

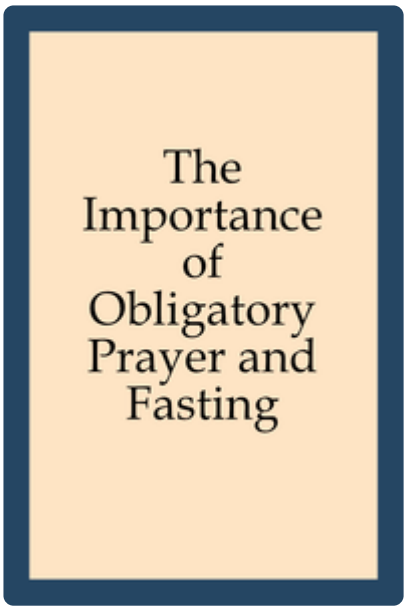
APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1981, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "EACH PHRASE WHICH ONE MAY SUBSTITUTE IS FOR A PARTICULAR PORTION OF THE PRAYER, AND THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE QUITE SPECIFIC WHERE THE SUBSTITUTIONS MAY BE MADE. FOR INSTANCE..."

April 23. On this date in 1981, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Each phrase which one may substitute is for a particular portion of the prayer, and the instructions are quite specific where the substitutions may be made. For instance..."

1535. Instructions for the Medium Obligatory Prayer

"Each phrase which one may substitute is for a particular portion of the prayer, and the instructions are quite specific where the substitutions may be made. For instance, the longest verse in the prayer begins with the same words as those which may be substituted; that is, after the instructions 'Then let him stand up, and facing the Qiblih, let him say: God testifieth that there is none other God but Him.' The second phrase which may be substituted, which states, 'it would suffice were he, while seated,...' may be used in place of the concluding paragraph which carries the instruction 'Let him, then, be seated and say:'--and, again, the substituted words follow exactly the first sentence of that final paragraph."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 23, 1981: Ibid.)



Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ GAVE A SPEECH AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY, TELLING THE AUDIENCE "PRAISE BE TO GOD! YOU ARE LIKE THE WHITES; THERE ARE NO GREAT DISTINCTIONS LEFT...IN SHORT, YOU MUST BE VERY THANKFUL TO THE WHITES WHO WERE THE CAUSE OF YOUR FREEDOM IN AMERICA....."

April 23. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a speech at Howard University, telling the audience "Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left...How they fought and sacrificed until they freed the blacks!...It was for your sake that the whites of America made such an effort. Were it not for this effort, universal emancipation would not have been proclaimed... In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America....Now — praise be to God! — everyone is free and lives in tranquillity."

> But I wish to say one thing in order that the blacks may become grateful to the whites and the whites become loving toward the blacks. If you go to Africa and see the blacks of Africa, you will realize how much progress you have made. **Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left. But the blacks of Africa are treated as servants. The first proclamation of emancipation for the blacks was made by the whites of America. How they fought and sacrificed until they freed the blacks!** Then it spread to other places. The blacks of Africa were in complete bondage, but your emancipation led to their freedom also — that is, the European states emulated the Americans, and the emancipation proclamation became universal. It was for your sake that the whites of America made such an effort. Were it not for this effort, universal emancipation would not have been proclaimed.
>
> **Therefore, you must be very grateful to the whites of America, and the whites must become very loving toward you so that you may progress in all human grades.** Strive jointly to make extraordinary progress and mix together completely. In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America. Had you not been freed, other blacks would not have been freed either. **Now — praise be to God! — everyone is free and lives in tranquillity.** I pray that you attain to such a degree of good character and behavior

> that the names of black and white shall vanish. All shall be called human, just as the name for a flight of doves is dove. They are not called black and white. Likewise with other birds.

Later in 1912, on September 2, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk elaborating his views on Africans, indigenous North Americans, native peoples, and pre-Columbian America at the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

> Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk on September 2, 1912 is as follows...

> Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.
>
> If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central**

Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind

and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers,**

domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the

sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE A LETTER TO JINÁB-I-ÁQÁ MÍRZÁ BÁDÍ'U'LLÁH KHÁN OF ABADIH ANSWERING FOUR QUESTIONS: (1) RE "CRIMSON SCROLL"; (2) RE THE "SACRED NIGHT"; (3) RE THE "TABLET OF THE BELL"; AND (4) USING THE KITAB-I-AQDAS FOR BIBLIOMANCY.

April 23. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter to Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Bádí'u'lláh Khán of Abadih answering four questions: (1) re "Crimson Scroll"; (2) re the "Sacred Night"; (3) re the "Tablet of the Bell"; and (4) using the Kitab-i-Aqdas for bibliomancy.

The paragraph regarding using the Kitab-i-Aqdas for bibliomancy has also been translated as follows...

> In your last question, concerning cases when those needed for consultation are not available and a person is uncertain on the course to be followed in an important matter, you ask whether it is permissible for him to resort to the practice of "istikhárih" (iv) using the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The Guardian has stated that in such cases what is necessary and essential is for the person to turn his heart wholly to God and to beseech aid from the Source of Grace and inspiration and nothing else. If it is possible to postpone the decision it would be preferable and more proper to do so, until the means for consultation are made available.
>
> *(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 23 April 1941 to an individual believer — translated from the Persian)*
>
> (iv) This is a process of divination, such as is done through bibliomancy, when a Holy Book is opened at random and guidance is sought for one's problem by reading passages of the Book on the opened page.

Letter to Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Bádí'u'lláh Khán of Abadih by Shoghi Effendi translated by Juan Cole. 1997-05 The letter put forward by that spiritual and dear friend dated 9 Bahman 1319 has come to the attention of the Guardian of the Cause of God, may our spirits be his sacrifice. The four questions concerning which you asked the favor of a reply from the most holy court were accepted and honored with a response.

With regard to the crimson scroll mentioned in the unapproachable Tablets,[2] he said, "Write that 'Abdu'l-Bahá' said that the original intent of the `Crimson Scroll' is the Tablet of the Covenant, that is, the Book of the Covenant."[3]

As for the Sacred Night, the recitation of blessed prayers and Tablets revealed for that night every year, and the inclusion of that night in the Bahá'í calendar, he said: "Write that it is permitted, but including it on the Bahá'í calendar is not required at the present time."

As concerns the blessed Tablet of the Bell, and the story of how it was revealed, he said: "Write that this Tablet was revealed in Istanbul at the request of Áqá Muhammad `Alí Isfahání as conveyed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'. This Tablet was written out by the Blessed Beauty[4] in His Own hand on the night of 5 Jumada al-Ulá, the night the Báb received His mission. Reciting this Tablet on that very blessed night is beloved and acceptable."

With regard to the last question, about a situation in which the means of consultation is absent and one has trouble making up one's mind about an important matter, you asked, "How should one consult the Most Holy Book for the purpose of soothsaying?"

He said, "In such a situation it is necessary and requisite that one turn with complete attention, in the spirit of seeking help, to the source of grace and inspiration, and to no one else. If it is possible to delay a bit in making one's decision until such time as consultation can be undertaken, this is better and more appropriate."

Written at his blessed behest. 15 Jalál 98 23 April 1941 Núru'd-Dín Zayn Seen: Shoghi Effendi

Notes

[1] Ma'idih-yi-Asmaní, 3:1 (JC's note).

[2] i.e. The 'Crimson Book'. See Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 32; Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 89, 90, 242 (MF's note).

[3] See Directives from the Guardian, #46 (MF's note).

[4] Bahá'u'lláh (JC's note).

Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE FRIENDS NEED ONLY READ THE WRITINGS; THE ANSWERS ARE ALL IN THEM; WE HAVE NO PRIESTS IN THIS FAITH TO INTERPRET OR ANSWER FOR US."

April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The friends need only read the Writings; the answers are all in them; we have no priests in this Faith to interpret or answer for us."

> 165. The friends need only read the Writings; the answers are all in them; we have no priests in this Faith to interpret or answer for us.
>
> (From a letter dated 23 April 1957 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

Anonymous: Wow … if this could be highlighted more.Councilors, Assembly members and UHJ members individually are not authoritative!AllahuAbha … Please post me! 🙏

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1963, THE FUNERAL OF ISRAEL'S SECOND PRESIDENT YITZHAK BEN-ZVI WAS HELD. "THE FIRST OFFICIAL ACT OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE FOLLOWING ITS ELECTION AT RIDVAN 1963 WAS TO SEND A DELEGATION CONSISTING OF TWO HANDS OF THE CAUSE AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE...

April 23. On this date in 1963, the funeral of Israel's second President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi was held. "The first official act of the Universal House of Justice following its election at Ridvan 1963 was to send a delegation consisting of two Hands of the Cause and two members of the House of Justice to attend the State funeral of Israel's second President, Izhak Ben Zvi, which was held in Jerusalem on April 23, 1963."

From page 92 of The Bahá'í World, Volume 14....

> RELATIONS WITH THE STATE OF ISRAEL
>
> The State of Israel from its inception has accorded high status to the international institutions of the Faith located at the World Centre. Historically speaking, there had always been, from the time of Baha'u'llah Himself, high respect for the Faith and its leaders on the part of local government officials. The rights, privileges and status granted to the Baha'is in the time of the Mandate were continued and in some respects enlarged following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.
>
> The first official act of the Universal House of Justice following its election at Ridvan 1963 was to send a delegation consisting of two Hands of the Cause and two members of the House of Justice to attend the State funeral of Israel's second President, Izhak Ben Zvi, which was held in Jerusalem on April 23, 1963.
>
> Israel's third President, Zalman Shazar, accepted the invitation of the Universal House of Justice in the spring of 1964 to pay a formal visit to the Shrine of the Bab and the Baha'i gardens on Mount Carmel. included in the Presidential party on that occasion were Mrs. Shazar and Mayor and Mrs. Aba Khoushy of Haifa. Later a delegation composed of Hands of the Cause and members of the Universal House of Justice returned the visit by calling on President Shazar at Beit Hanassi in Jerusalem.

The cordial relationship which exists between the World Centre and the State of Israel was further enhanced when Mark Tobey and Bernard Leach each presented a piece of their work to the new Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The Mayor of Jerusalem, who is also Director of the Museum, expressed great pleasure and gratitude for these gifts from Baha'is of such fame.

The change in management of the various Israel Branches of National Assemblies from the Custodians to members of the Universal House of Justice was officially accepted by the State of Israel, and in all other respects the status of the Universal House of Justice as the head of the Faith was recognized and respected.

In 1966 a stone wall and new entrance to the Baha'i cemetery in Haifa were constructed, resulting in the beautification of this treasured visiting place of Baha'i pilgrims where many outstanding early Baha'is are buried at the foot of Mount Carmel just below the cave of Elijah.

Comments

Sertorius126: Can anyone comment on the most recent change. I heard that the city of Haifa changed recognition of Bahá'í Holy places from "place of pilgrimage" to "tourist destination".

According-Outside535: World heritage would probably be a worthy title?

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "IN THE FUTURE, WHEN THE NEXT MANIFESTATION APPEARS, THE GUARDIAN OF THE CAUSE AT THAT TIME WILL TELL THE BELIEVERS WHO THE MANIFESTATION IS AND WILL CALL ON THEM TO ACCEPT HIM. WHAT IS THE USE OF THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE GUARDIAN IF HE ..."

April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "In the future, when the next Manifestation appears, the Guardian of the Cause at that time will tell the believers who the Manifestation is and will call on them to accept Him. What is the use of the infallibility of the Guardian if he does not do this? This is one of the very important things that he will do. Opposition to the next Manifestation will thus be much less than in former times – that is to say, the area of opposition will be reduced. 'This is the day that shall not be followed by night' means that divine guidance will not again be withdrawn from the world. This civilization which we are beginning to build now will not decline. Other Manifestations will change the institutions and the laws, but there will be no decline. The earth will be the footstool of the throne of God. The throne is in heaven and the footstool on earth."

Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD ... THIS IS THE FUNCTION OF FIRE – TO BURN, PURIFY AND WELD. THE LESSER PEACE WILL COME IN THE FORMATIVE AGE, IN THIS CENTURY."

April 23. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "The time has come for the destruction of the world – for the destruction of the systems of the world: political, economic, social and religious. The economy of the world will collapse. The dollar will become totally valueless. The world-wide retributive calamity will burn, purify and weld the people of the world. This is the function of fire – to burn, purify and weld. The Lesser Peace will come in the Formative Age, in this century."

Comments

APRIL 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1963, THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CONCLUDED IN HAIFA, ISRAEL, WITH THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF 45 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES WHO HAD GATHERED AT THE HOUSE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

April 23. On this date in 1963, the First International Convention concluded in Haifa, Israel, with the election of the first Universal House of Justice by representatives of 45 Regional and National Assemblies who had gathered at the House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.

Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

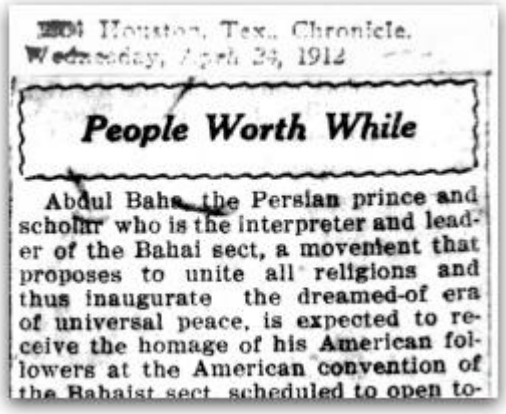
APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE STATED "BAHÁ'ÍSM NOW HAS 15,000,000 ADHERENTS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND OF WHOM ARE IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA."

April 24. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article stated "Bahá'ísm now has 15,000,000 adherents scattered throughout the world, several hundred thousand of whom are in the United States and Canada."

> People Worth While
>
> Houston Texas Chronicle April 24, 1912 Houston, TX
>
> 'Abdu'l-Bahá the Persian prince and scholar who is the interpreter and leader of the Bahá'í sect, a movement that proposes to unite all religions and thus inaugurate the dreamed-of era of universal peace, is expected to receive the homage of his American followers at the American convention of the Bahá'í sect, scheduled to open today in Chicago. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which is a title signifying Servant of God, comes to America to carry on the propaganda of the new faith and to address the peace conference at Lake Mohonk, N.Y., next month. **Although it was founded only 68 years ago, Bahá'ísm now has 15,000,000 adherents scattered throughout the world, several hundred thousand of whom are in the United States and Canada.**
>
> 'Abdu'l-Bahá succeeded to the leadership of the sect 20 years ago, on the death of Bahá'u'lláh, his father, who was the "illuminated one" of Bahá'ísm and was known as the Glory of God. Brotherhood and peace between men and nations are the central dogmas of the teaching of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Already they have had effect in the constitutional movements in Persia and Turkey, where Bahá'ísm is rapidly gaining ground. Because of their propaganda, which was considered by the fanatical Moslems to constitute an attack on their religion, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his father were imprisoned for nearly half a century.
>
> When Mohammed Ali began preaching the doctrines of Bahá'ísm in 1844, he soon found a devoted adherent in the wealthy Prince of Nur, one of the most influential

of Persians and a descendant of the ancient royal family of that country. When the prince was recognized as Bahá'u'lláh, the expected one, the Glory of God, he was thrown into prison and all his property was confiscated. From the wealthiest man of Persia, he became its most miserable, but his faith in the new dispensation never wavered, and it was fully shared by his son, the present 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was only 9 years old when he was deprived of the luxuries and pleasures of the palace and thrown into a dungeon at Acca, perhaps the most loathsome prison in the world. He was about 60 when he was released. Although deprived of all formal education, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was taught by his father and this fitted him to become a worthy successor.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, with his wonderfully penetrating eyes, his wealth of silvery hair and long white beard, and his thoughtful and philosophic air, would be a striking figure if clad in conventional garb.



Houston, Tex., Chronicle.
Wednesday, April 24, 1912

People Worth While

Abdul Baha, the Persian prince and scholar who is the interpreter and leader of the Bahai sect, a movement that proposes to unite all religions and thus inaugurate the dreamed-of era of universal peace, is expected to receive the homage of his American followers at the American convention of the Bahaist sect scheduled to open to-

Comments

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 2017, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD NEWS SERVICE PUBLISHED A STORY ABOUT DJAOUGA ABDOULAYE, WHO "BECAME A BAHA'I IN THE 1980S WHEN THE FAITH INITIALLY CAME TO BENIN." THE NEWS REPORT STATES THAT HE WAS ENTHRONED HIGH CHIEF IN JULY OF 2016.

April 24. On this date in 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Interestingly, while Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim:

> "It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

Sertorius126: The Báb: "dear monarch, accept my faith"Bahá'úlláh: "all monarchs must accept my faith"Some guy here: wHy aRE roYalTy bEcoMiNG Bahá'í?

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 2002, BARBARA HELEN RUTLEDGE SIMS DIED. A THIRD GENERATION BAHÁ'Í, SHE PIONEERED TO JAPAN DURING THE FIRST GLOBAL CRUSADE WHERE SHE WAS ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE INAUGURAL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES OF NORTH EAST ASIA AND JAPAN.

April 24. On this date in 2002, Barbara Helen Rutledge Sims died. A third generation Bahá'í, she pioneered to Japan during the first Global Crusade where she was elected a member of the inaugural National Spiritual Assemblies of North East Asia and Japan.

Comments

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE COVERING 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ QUOTED HIM AS SAYING, "THE COLORED PEOPLE OF AFRICA WERE IN A MOST TERRIBLE STATE OF BONDAGE, AND THE EUROPEAN POWERS, EMULATING THE AMERICAN ALTRUISM...YOU MUST BE VERY GRATEFUL AND MUST BE VERY KIND TO THE WHITES HERE."

April 24. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article covering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to North America quoted him as saying, "Let us recall the fact that the first proclamation of liberty, of freedom from slavery, was accomplished in this continent...The colored people of Africa were in a most terrible state of bondage, and the European powers, emulating the American altruism, accomplished a proclamation of universal liberty. So you were the means here of liberating your fellow-beings elsewhere. This effort on the part of the white people in America should never be lost sight of, and therefore you must be very grateful and must be very kind to the whites here."

ABDUL BAHA TO GIVE
LAST LECTURE FRIDAY

Leader of Bahai Movement to Leave for Chicago to Attend Conference.

Comments

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1940, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS "URGENTLY PLEAD FERVENTLY PRAY ALL RANKS VALIANT FORERUNNERS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S COMMONWEALTH MAY ERE EXPIRY ALLOTTED TERM BRING FRUITION MISSION ENSURE ASCENDANCY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER ENTIRE WESTERN HEMISPHERE."

April 24. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi cabled American Bahá'ís "Urgently plead fervently pray all ranks valiant forerunners Bahá'u'lláh's commonwealth may ere expiry allotted term bring fruition mission ensure ascendancy Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual sovereignty over entire western hemisphere."

Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Sovereignty

Message to 1940 Convention

24 APRIL 1940

OVERJOYED ELATED DYNAMIC ENERGY INVINCIBLE VALOR AMERICAN BELIEVERS IMPELLED THEM FAR OUTSTRIP GOAL FIXED THIRD YEAR SEVEN YEAR PLAN. TEMPLE ORNAMENTATION UNINTERRUPTEDLY PURSUED. THEATER OPERATION TEACHING CAMPAIGN ALREADY EMBRACING ENTIRE CENTRAL AMERICA AND EVERY SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLIC EXCEPTING PARAGUAY COLOMBIA. NUMBER COUNTRIES WITHIN ORBIT FAITH NOW EXCEEDING SIXTY. INTERCONTINENTAL CRUSADE, THROUGH PATH BROKEN MARTHA ROOT AND SEAL SET MAY MAXWELL'S DEATH YIELDING DESTINED FRUIT, GALVANIZED PERMANENTLY SAFEGUARDED. TOGETHER WITH KEITH THEY FORGED THROUGH SACRIFICE TRIPLE CORD INDISSOLUBLY KNITTING COMMUNITY NORTH AMERICAN BELIEVERS TO CRADLE FAITH, EVERY CONTINENT OLD WORLD AND LATIN AMERICA. UNPERTURBED GATHERING GLOOM TOTTERING CIVILIZATION WITHOUT CONTEMPTUOUS ASSAULT PERFIDIOUS ENEMIES WITHIN EXECUTORS ABDU'L-BAHA'S MANDATE MUST WILL STRAIN EVERY

NERVE COURSE ENSUING YEAR MULTIPLY NUMBER ENROLLED PIONEERS CONSOLIDATE WORK ACHIEVED NEWLY OPENED NORTH AMERICAN STATES PROVINCES ENSURE PROMPT SETTLEMENT REMAINING REPUBLICS PROSECUTE UNREMITTINGLY ORNAMENTATION LAST UNIT MASHRIQU'L-ADHKAR EXPEDITE FORMATION IN ISOLATED CENTERS NUCLEI CAPABLE ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL ASSEMBLIES. URGENTLY PLEAD FERVENTLY PRAY ALL RANKS VALIANT FORERUNNERS BAHA'U'LLAH'S COMMONWEALTH MAY ERE EXPIRY ALLOTTED TERM BRING FRUITION MISSION ENSURE ASCENDANCY BAHA'U'LLAH'S SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY OVER ENTIRE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

Comments

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1926, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE ABOUT HIS "UNFORTUNATE ILLNESS, AMOUNTING ALMOST TO A BREAK-DOWN." IN FEBRUARY OF 1926 HE HAD WRITTEN ABOUT HIS "ANXIETIES AND PREOCCUPATIONS. MY MIND IS EXTREMELY TIRED AND I FEEL I AM BECOMING INEFFICIENT AND SLOW DUE TO THIS MENTAL FATIGUE."

April 24. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote that his delay in answering letters was due to "my unfortunate illness, amounting almost to a break-down."

From Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, in the chapter titled *Early Years of the Guardianship*...

> A brief resume of events such as these conveys none of the day-to-day suspense that attends them, the fluctuations between hope and despair, the good news and bad news that alternate with each other and wear away the heart and strength. The first impact of the Supreme Court's decision had scarcely been received when Dr Esslemont suddenly died. Coming at such a time of crisis the loss of his friend was a doubly grievous blow to the Guardian.
>
> A bare week before this event Shoghi Effendi had sent messages to the Bahá'í world which reflected another keen point of anxiety occupying his mind at this time. Rumours had been bruited about that the remains of a certain prominent leader of Zionism might be brought to the Holy Land to be buried befittingly on Mt Carmel. In view of this Shoghi Effendi appealed to the believers to contribute funds for the immediate purchase of land in the vicinity of the Bab's Tomb, particularly overlooking it, in order to safeguard this Holy Spot. so overwhelming was their response that a little over a month later he could inform them that their generous and splendid support had achieved its purpose, but there can be no doubt that for a time at least this had also greatly added to the back-breaking burden of his cares.
>
> So heavy was this burden that in February 1926 he wrote to one of the believers: **"I am submerged in a sea of activities, anxieties and preoccupations. My mind is extremely tired and I feel I am becoming inefficient and slow due to this**

mental fatigue." This condition became so acute that he was forced to go away for a brief rest. "The overwhelming burden of pressing cares and responsibilities", he wrote towards the end of March, "necessitated my departure at a time when...I was most anxious to receive my friends and co-workers from various parts of the world." He must have been ill, indeed, to have absented himself from Haifa and his guests, but whatever his condition in February and March it was mild compared to that into which he was plunged by a wire from Persia, sent on 11 April, from Shiraz, which baldly stated: "Twelve friends in Jahrom martyred agitation may extend elsewhere" to which he replied the same day "Horrified sudden calamity. Suspend activities. Appeal central authorities. Convey relatives tenderest sympathy". He also wired that same day to Tehran a message so significant of the spirit of the Faith that its conjunction with the events in Jahrum cannot be ignored: "I earnestly request all believers Persia Turkistan Caucasus participate whole-heartedly in renewal Spiritual Assemblies election. No true Bahá'í can stand aside. Results should be promptly forwarded Holy Land through central assemblies communicate immediately with every centre. Proceed cautiously. Imploring Divine assistance." The following day, having received a more detailed wire from Shiraz advising that the chief instigator of the agitation there had been arrested and giving certain suggestions, Shoghi Effendi telegraphed Tehran: "Griefstricken Jahrom martyrdom. Convey His Majesty on behalf all Bahá'ís and myself our profound appreciation his prompt intervention and our earnest entreaty to inflict immediate punishment on perpetrators of such atrocious crime. Urge all Persian Assemblies send similar message." It is a slight, but significant, indication of his mental state that in the first cables he spells "Jahrom" phonetically, but later switches to the transliterated "Jahrum".

What all this meant to Shoghi Effendi is expressed by him in a letter to one of his co-workers, written on 24 April. After acknowledging receipt of his many letters, he explains that his delay in answering them has been due to **"my unfortunate illness, amounting almost to a break-down, combined with the receipt of the most distressing news from Persia reporting the martyrdom of twelve of our friends in the town of Jahrum, south of Shiraz.** I have wired for full particulars and will communicate them to the various Bahá'í centres immediately I receive detailed information. Political considerations and personal rivalries appear to have played no small part...I have transmitted a message to the Shah through the Persian

National Spiritual Assembly..I have also requested foreign Assemblies to give in an unoffensive language full publicity to these reports in their respective newspapers, but have thought it premature for them to get into direct relation with the Shah... It is sad and annoying to reflect that the Bahá'ís, pressed as they are by so many afflicting and humiliating circumstances, seem at the present time quite impotent and helpless in their efforts to secure the needed assistance from recognized authorities. There must surely be some wisdom underlying this apparent futility of their strenuous efforts." In a cable to this same individual, sent two weeks later, Shoghi Effendi says he is **"deeply afflicted"**.

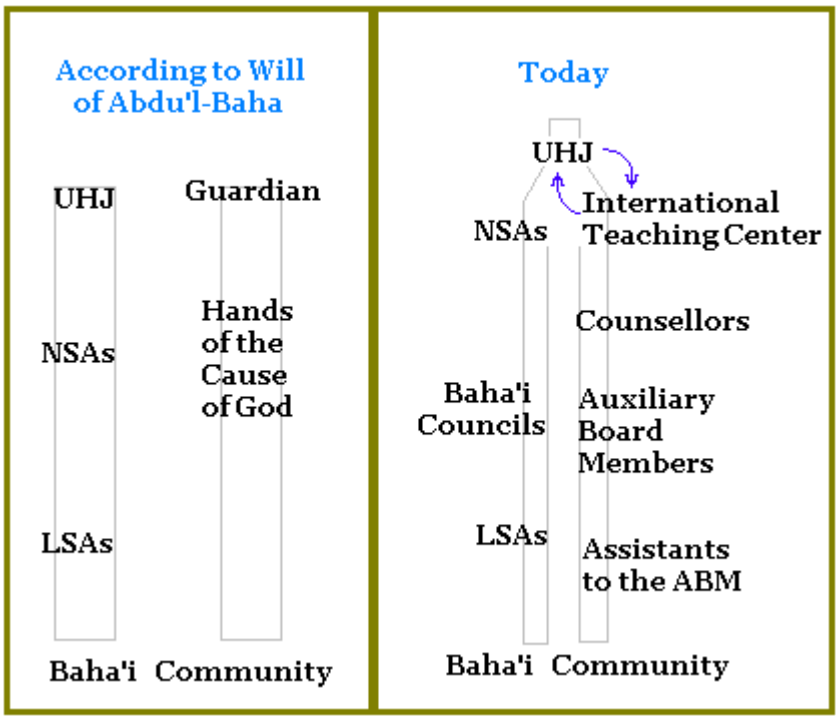
On 21 May, again writing to this same Bahá'í, he opens his heart and says: **"I myself am too tired to do any effective work at present. I have become slow, impatient, inefficient...I am trying to get away if no sudden crises again takes place. I have had so many of them during the last few months..." Yet in this state Shoghi Effendi managed to do what he thought could be done: "I feel that with patience, tact, courage and resource we can utilize this development to further the interests and extend the influence of the Cause."** he had mustered the forces of the Bahá'í world in defence of the oppressed Persian Community, ensured that wide publicity in the foreign press be given to these martyrdoms and constantly directed various National Assemblies in the action they should take in this respect as well as in the case of the Most Holy House.

Such is the tale of one period of the Guardian's life; how many blows rained on him in a little over six months, at a time when he was still struggling to get the load that had been placed on his shoulders at the time of the Master's passing properly balanced so that he could carry it!

Comments

APRIL 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "THERE IS A HIERARCHY IN THE FAITH. YOU MUST NOT BE AFRAID TO TEACH THE PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE A HIERARCHY. IN THE WEST THEY DO NO LIKE HIERARCHIES, BUT THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE FAITH HAS A DEFINITE HIERARCHY."

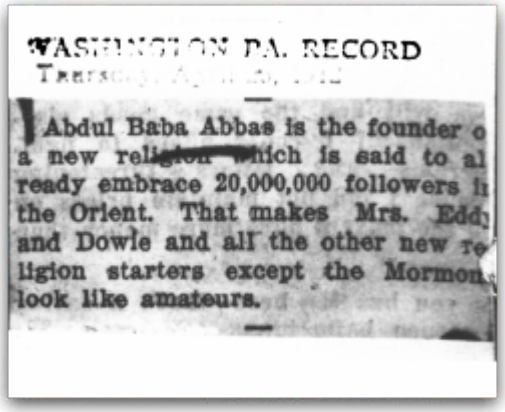
April 24. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "There is a hierarchy in the Faith. You must not be afraid to teach the people that we have a hierarchy. In the west they do no like hierarchies, but they must understand that the Faith has a definite hierarchy. The Baha'i hierarchy is composed as follows. At the top is the function of interpretation – the Guardianship; next comes protection – eventually the function of the Hands of the Cause; then comes propagation – now in the hands of the Assemblies, but in the future the responsibility of the Hands of the Cause; and finally administration – the Assemblies. The primary function of the Guardian is interpretation, of the Hands protection and propagation, of the Assemblies government."



Comments

APRIL 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE STATED, "'ABDUL BA[H]A ABBAS IS THE FOUNDER OF A NEW RELIGION WHICH IS SAID TO ALREADY EMBRACE 20,000,000 FOLLOWERS IN THE ORIENT. THAT MAKES MRS. EDDY AND DOWIE AND ALL THE OTHER NEW RELIGION STARTERS EXCEPT THE MORMONS LOOK LIKE AMATEURS."

April 25. On this date in 1912, a newspaper article stated, "'Abdul Ba[h]a Abbas is the founder of a new religion which is said to already embrace 20,000,000 followers in the Orient. That makes Mrs. Eddy and Dowie and all the other new religion starters except the Mormons look like amateurs."


WASHINGTON PA. RECORD

Abdul Baba Abbas is the founder o a new religion which is said to al ready embrace 20,000,000 followers i the Orient. That makes Mrs. Eddy and Dowie and all the other new re ligion starters except the Mormons look like amateurs.

Comments

APRIL 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1951, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED BRITISH BAHÁ'ÍS, CALLING AFRICA A "VAST DARK SPIRITUALLY DECADENT CONTINENT" NEEDING BAHÁ'ÍS TO "PENETRATE ITS HEART, BRIGHTEN ITS JUNGLE" TO ENLIGHTEN "WORLD'S BACKWARD RACES."

April 25. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi cabled British Bahá'ís, calling Africa a "vast dark spiritually decadent continent" needing Bahá'ís to "penetrate its heart, brighten its jungle" to enlighten "world's backward races."

> 25 April 1951 (Convention)
>
> REJOICE THANKFUL PROUD STERLING QUALITIES FIDELITY TENACITY INTREPIDITY BRITISH FOLLOWERS FAITH BAHA'U'LLAH CONSPICUOUSLY DEMONSTRATED COURSE INTERVAL SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION SIX YEAR FORMAL INAUGURATION TWO YEAR PLAN. HEARTILY CONGRATULATE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED OCCASION HISTORIC NUMERICALLY ENLARGED EPOCH MAKING CONVENTION. ONE YEAR RESPITE REGARDED BREATHING SPELL DESIGNED ENABLE TOILING TRIUMPHANT VALOROUS HIGH MINDED COMMUNITY RECRUIT FORCES WITNESSED UNEXPECTED DISPLAY VIGOROUS ACTIVITY RESULTING FIRST VICTORIES AFRICAN FIELD PRESERVATION LABORIOUSLY ESTABLISHED ASSEMBLIES LENGTH BREADTH BRITISH ISLES. TWO YEAR PLAN NOW OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED DEMANDS CONTINUOUS UNSTINTED SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT NATIONAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ALL LOCAL ASSEMBLIES RANK FILE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. AUSPICIOUS RAYS GOD'S DAWNING REVELATION WHICH FIRST STRUCK CORNER **VAST DARK SPIRITUALLY DECADENT CONTINENT** COURSE BAHA'U'LLAH'S MINISTRY WHICH WARMED ILLUMINATED ITS NORTHERN SOUTHERN FRINGES CONCLUDING YEARS HEROIC AGE FAITH MUST NOW **PENETRATE ITS HEART BRIGHTEN ITS JUNGLE** FASTNESSES ENVELOP IT WITH SPLENDOUR THEIR RADIANCE COURSE PRESENT SUCCEEDING EPOCHS FORMATIVE

AGE BAHA'I DISPENSATION. CONFIDENT BRITISH BAHA'I COMMUNITY WILL ARISE BEFITTINGLY MEET CHALLENGE NOW CONFRONTING IT ACHIEVE THREEFOLD PURPOSE PLAN. PRAYING ENERGETIC COLLABORATION PROSECUTORS ABDU'L-BAHA'S DIVINE PLAN WITH COMMUNITY BELIEVERS BELONGING NATION WHOSE DESTINY BEEN LINKED FORTUNES **WORLD'S BACKWARD RACES** REINFORCED ASSISTANCE SISTER COMMUNITY CRADLE FAITH NATIONAL ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES LEADING COMMUNITY AFRICAN CONTINENT MAY ENSURE SUCCESS CRUSADE CONSTITUTING SPIRITUAL LANDMARK PROCESS **AWAKENING AFRICAN PEOPLES** MARKING OPENING GLORIOUS CHAPTER EVOLUTION WORLD FAITH BAHA'U'LLAH SIGNALISING INITIAL PHASE UNFOLDMENT MISSION COMMUNITY HIS FOLLOWERS BRITISH ISLES MIDST DOMINIONS COLONIES PROTECTORATES BRITISH CROWN. MAY PROJECTED CENTENARY BIRTH PROPHETIC MISSION BAHA'U'LLAH BEFITTINGLY CELEBRATED CONVOCATION FIRST ALL AFRICAN TEACHING CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE BLACK WHITE RACES EMBRACING SEVENTEEN AFRICAN TERRITORIES NOW INCLUDED PALE FAITH. ARRANGING TRANSMISSION ONE THOUSAND POUNDS CONTRIBUTION FURTHERANCE GLORIOUS OBJECTIVE.

SHOGHI

Comments

APRIL 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1937, SHOGHI EFFENDI "HAIFA WILL BE THE TERMINUS OF A RAILROAD LINE WHICH WILL FOLLOW ALONG THE PIPE LINE TO PERSIA, THRU AFGHANISTAN TO CALCUTTA. ANOTHER LINE WILL RUN FROM HAIFA TO CAIRO AND TO THE SUDAN, AND FROM THERE WILL BE EXTENDED TO CENTRAL AFRICA AND TO CAPETOWN.

April 25. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "Haifa will be the terminus of a railroad line which will follow along the pipe line to Persia, thru Afghanistan to Calcutta. Another line will run from Haifa to Cairo and to the Sudan, and from there will be extended to Central Africa and to Capetown."

Comments

APRIL 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ATTENDED A DINNER HELD IN HIS HONOR AT THE TURKISH EMBASSY BY AMBASSADOR YUSUF ZIYA PASHA. THE DINNER IS DOCUMENTED, AMONG OTHER PLACES, IN THE DIARIES OF JULIET THOMPSON AND AGNES PARSONS, WHO NOTES 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ "LIKENED THE AMBASSADOR TO THE SUN."

April 25. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá attended a dinner held in his honor at the Turkish Embassy in Washington by Ambassador Yusuf Ziya Pasha. The dinner is documented, among other places, in the diaries of Juliet Thompson and Agnes Parsons, who notes 'Abdu'l-Bahá "likened the Ambassador to the sun."

Comments

APRIL 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "YOU CAN TEACH THE FAITH TO THE AFRICAN MOSLEMS – BECAUSE THEY ARE STILL PURE-HEARTED AND CAN RESPOND. BUT THE INDIAN MOSLEMS AND THE ARAB MOSLEMS ARE OUR POTENTIAL ENEMIES AND ARE TO BE AVOIDED."

April 25. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi said "You should avoid the Ismailis. There is no possibility of their becoming Baha'is. On the contrary, they are our potential enemies. You should stay away from them. They are jealous of us. You should also avoid the Indians, the Europeans and the Arabs. The Indians want money and the Europeans political supremacy. You should avoid the Arab Moslems – they are jealous of us. They are dangerous to us. You can teach the Faith to the African Moslems – because they are still pure-hearted and can respond. But the Indian Moslems and the Arab Moslems are our potential enemies and are to be avoided."

Comments

APRIL 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1939, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED NORTH AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS, LISTING GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA, PANAMA, CUBA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND HAITI, AND CALLING THEM "RELIGIOUSLY INTOLERANT, SOCIALLY BACKWARD, CLIMATICALLY INHOSPITABLE."

April 26. On this date in 1939, Shoghi Effendi cabled North American Bahá'ís, listing Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, and calling them "religiously intolerant, socially backward, climatically inhospitable."

51-Penetration of Latin America

Message to 1939 Convention

26 APRIL 1939

BRILLIANT CONCLUSION SECOND YEAR SEVEN YEAR PLAN EVOKES UNIVERSAL ADMIRATION BAHA'I WORLD DEEPENS SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS MITIGATES HARDSHIPS INCREASINGLY HARASSED COMMUNITIES. CLOSING PHASE TEMPLE ORNAMENTATION ALREADY ENTERED. INITIAL STAGE OF INTERCONTINENTAL TEACHING CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFULLY TERMINATED. FIRM ANCHORAGE INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED EVERY STATE PROVINCE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT. MEXICO LYING FOREFRONT SOUTHWARD MARCHING ARMY RECENTLY ENLISTED. PEDRO ESPINOSA'S AUSPICIOUS ATTENDANCE CONVENTION WELCOME EVIDENCE. SETTLEMENT CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS NEXT STEP PROGRESSIVE, SYSTEMATIC PENETRATION LATIN AMERICA. UPSURGE OF BAHA'U'LLAH'S IMPELLING SPIRIT CANNOT WILL NOT BE STEMMED IMPEDED. METHODICAL ADVANCE ALONG LINE TRACED PEN ABDU'L-BAHA IRRESISTIBLE. GUATEMALA HONDURAS SALVADOR NICARAGUA COSTA RICA PANAMA CUBA DOMINICA

HAITI IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES. THOUGH POLITICALLY UNSETTLED **RELIGIOUSLY INTOLERANT SOCIALLY BACKWARD CLIMATICALLY INHOSPITABLE** THESE UNEXPLORED TERRITORIES HOLD FORTH INESTIMABLE PRIZES AUDACIOUS ADVENTURES PATH OF BAHA'I SERVICE. DEARLY BELOVED MARTHA'S UNRIVALED EXPERIENCE INDOMITABLE FAITH INDEFATIGABLE LABORS WILL SOON REINFORCE POWERS RELEASED CONTEMPLATED CAMPAIGN. TASK ADMITTEDLY LABORIOUS HOUR LADEN WITH FATE PRIVILEGE INCOMPARABLE PRECIOUS DIVINELY PROMISED AID UNFAILING REWARD PREDESTINED IMMEASURABLE. APPEAL ALL BELIEVERS, WHITE NEGRO ALIKE ARISE ASSUME RIGHTFUL RESPONSIBILITIES. URGE PROLONGATION SESSIONS CONVENTION ENABLE DELEGATES EXERCISE INALIENABLE RIGHT DELIBERATE FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS DESIGNED AID INCOMING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTELY PROSECUTE MOMENTOUS ENTERPRISE. FERVOR PRAYERS INTENSIFIED.

Comments

APRIL 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1923, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "IF THE YOUNGER BAHÁ'Í GENERATION... THAT THE MASTER HAS LAID THE TREMENDOUS WORK OF TEACHING. THEY ARE THE ONES TO RAISE THE CALL OF THE KINGDOM AND AROUSE THE PEOPLE FROM SLUMBER. IF THEY FAIL THE CAUSE IS DOOMED TO STAGNATION..."

April 26. On this date in 1923, a letter written in behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "If the younger Bahá'í generation, in whom Shoghi Effendi has great hopes, take the pain of studying the Cause deeply and thoroughly, read its history, find its underlying principles and become both well informed and energetic, they surely can achieve a great deal. It is upon their shoulders that the Master has laid the tremendous work of teaching. They are the ones to raise the call of the Kingdom and arouse the people from slumber. If they fail the Cause is doomed to stagnation..."

> 2241. If the younger Bahá'í generation, in whom Shoghi Effendi has great hopes, take the pain of studying the Cause deeply and thoroughly, read its history, find its underlying principles and become both well informed and energetic, they surely can achieve a great deal. It is upon their shoulders that the Master has laid the tremendous work of teaching. They are the ones to raise the call of the Kingdom and arouse the people from slumber. If they fail the Cause is doomed to stagnation....
>
> (26 April 1923 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma)

Comments

APRIL 27. ON THIS DATE IN 1958, THE CUSTODIANS CABLED ALL BAHÁ'ÍS ANNOUNCING THE DEATH OF AHMAD SOHRAB, "STRIKING EVIDENCE (OF) GOD'S AVENGING WRATH." 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S SECRETARY AND INTERPRETER, HE FORMED THE "NEW HISTORY SOCIETY" IN ORDER TO PROPAGATE THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, AND DIED AT 68 YEARS OLD.

April 27. On this date in 1958, the Custodians cabled all Bahá'ís announcing the death of Ahmad Sohrab, "striking evidence (of) God's avenging wrath." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter, he formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith, and died at 68 years old.

BAHA'I WILMETTE

APRIL 27,1958

SOHRAB RELENTLESS ENEMY FAITH AFTER WITNESSING THIRD CENTURY IRRESISTIBLE SPREAD HOLY CAUSE FORTYFIVE HUNDRED CENTRES GUIDANCE BELOVED GUARDIAN DIED FIRST RIDVAN EVERY HOPE FRUSTRATED EVERY PLAN EXTINGUISHED EVERY AMBITION THWARTED STOP **STRIKING EVIDENCE GODS AVENGING WRATH** ONE HAND ON OTHER UNFAILING PROTECTION COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS REARED BELOVED GUARDIAN INSPIRES BELIEVERS ARISE SERVE RENEWED COURAGE DEDICATION ENSURE COMPLETE SUCCESS CRUSADE STOP SHARE MESSAGE HANDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES

HANDSFAITH

Sohrab

Comments

APRIL 27. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BAHÁ'Í THEOCRACY AND THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

April 27. On this date in 1995, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding the development of a Bahá'í theocracy and the separation of Church and State.

The Universal House of Justice Department of the Secretariat

27 April 1995

[To an individual]

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your email of 19 February 1995 addressed to the Research Department was referred to the Universal House of Justice. In it you quote two phrases which appear in a book you have recently read, and which seem from the context to be citations from Shoghi Effendi. These phrases are "Bahá'í theocracy" and "humanity will emerge from that immature civilization in which church and state are separate." You ask whether these references can be authenticated and dated. We have been instructed to send you the following reply.

A reference to "Bahá'í theocracy" is to be found in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual Bahá'í on 30 September 1949. This reads as follows:

He thinks your question is well put: what the Guardian was referring to was the theocratic systems, such as the Catholic Church and the Caliphate, which are not divinely given as systems, but man-made, and yet, being partly derived from the teachings of Christ and Muḥammad are in a sense theocracies. The Bahá'í theocracy, on the contrary, is both divinely ordained as a system and, of course, based on the teachings of the Prophet Himself.

The other passage does not comprise words of Shoghi Effendi, although its purport was approved by him. As you yourself have since discovered, it can be found in The Bahá'í World, volume VI, on page 199, in a statement entitled "Concerning Membership in Non-Bahá'í Religious Organizations," about which the Guardian's secretary had written on his behalf on 11 December 1935: "The Guardian has carefully read the copy of the statement you had recently prepared concerning nonmembership in non-Bahá'í religious organizations, and is pleased to

realize that your comments and explanations are in full conformity with his views on the subject."

The complete paragraph in which the words appear is as follows:

In the light of these words, it seems fully evident that the way to approach this instruction is in realizing the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as an ever-growing organism destined to become something new and greater than any of the revealed religions of the past. Whereas former Faiths inspired hearts and illumined souls, they eventuated in formal religions with an ecclesiastical organization, creeds, rituals and churches, while the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, likewise renewing man's spiritual life, will gradually produce the institutions of an ordered society, fulfilling not merely the function of the churches of the past but also the function of the civil state. By this manifestation of the Divine Will in a higher degree than in former ages, humanity will emerge from that immature civilization in which church and state are separate and competitive institutions, and partake of a true civilization in which spiritual and social principles are at last reconciled as two aspects of one and the same Truth.

You also ask how these statements could be reconciled with Shoghi Effendi's comment on page 149 of Bahá'í Administration, which appears to anticipate "a future that is sure to witness the formal and complete separation of Church and State," and with the following words in his letter of 21 March 1932 addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

A careful reading of the letter dated 6 December 1928 in which the Guardian's comment about the separation of Church and State occurs would suggest that, rather than enunciating a general principle, Shoghi Effendi is simply reviewing "the quickening forces of internal reform" that had "recently transpired throughout the Near and Middle East," and enumerating a number of factors that impinge on the development of the Faith in those parts of the world.

As for the statement made by Shoghi Effendi in his letter of 21 March 1932, the well-established principles of the Faith concerning the relationship of the Bahá'í institutions to those of the country in which the Bahá'ís reside make it unthinkable that they would ever purpose to violate a country's constitution or so to meddle in its political machinery as to attempt to take over the powers of government. This is an integral element of the Bahá'í principle of abstention from involvement in politics. However, this does not by any means imply that the country itself may

not, by constitutional means, decide to adopt Bahá'í laws and practices and modify its constitution or method of government accordingly. The relationship between the principle of abstention from involvement in politics and the emergence of the Bahá'í State is commented on later in this letter. In the meantime we can quote the following extracts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian in response to queries from individual believers, which indicate that the relationship is an evolving one:

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.… Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve.

(30 November 1930)

The Bahá'ís will be called upon to assume the reins of government when they will come to constitute the majority of the population in a given country, and even then their participation in political affairs is bound to be limited in scope unless they obtain a similar majority in some other countries as well.

(19 November 1939)

The Bahá'ís must remain non-partisan in all political affairs. In the distant future, however, when the majority of a country have become Bahá'ís then it will lead to the establishment of a Bahá'í State.

(19 April 1941)

A proper understanding of all the above passages, and of their implications, requires an acceptance of two fundamental principles for the exegesis of Bahá'í Texts.

The first, which derives from the Covenant, is the principle that the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and intimately linked with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh Himself. This principle is clearly expounded in two paragraphs from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer on 19 March 1946:

Whatever the Master has said is based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He was the perfect Interpreter, had lived with Him all His life; therefore what He says has the same standing, even if a text of Bahá'u'lláh is not available.…

We must take the teachings as a great, balanced whole, not seek out and oppose to each other two strong statements that have different meanings; somewhere in between, there are links uniting the two. That is what makes our Faith so flexible and well balanced. For instance there are calamities for testing and for punishment—there are also accidents, plain cause and effect!

Bahá'u'lláh has given us a Revelation designed to raise mankind to heights never before attained. It is little wonder that the minds of individual believers, no matter how perceptive, have difficulty in comprehending its range. It is the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian which elucidate this vast Revelation and make clear the manner in which different statements relate to one another and what is implied by the Revealed Word. Without the bright light of the Covenant, this Faith, like all those before it, would be torn to pieces by the conflicting opinions of scholars applying limited human reasoning to divinely revealed truths.

The second fundamental principle which enables us to understand the pattern towards which Bahá'u'lláh wishes human society to evolve is the principle of organic growth which requires that detailed developments, and the understanding of detailed developments, become available only with the passage of time and with the help of the guidance given by that Central Authority in the Cause to whom all must turn. In this regard one can use the simile of a tree. If a farmer plants a tree, he cannot state at that moment what its exact height will be, the number of its branches or the exact time of its blossoming. He can, however, give a general impression of its size and pattern of growth and can state with confidence which fruit it will bear. The same is true of the evolution of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For example, we find the following illuminating explanation in a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís in America on 23 February 1924:

And as we make an effort to demonstrate that love to the world may we also clear our minds of any lingering trace of unhappy misunderstandings that might obscure our clear conception of the exact purpose and methods of this new world order, so challenging and complex, yet so consummate and wise. We are called upon by our beloved Master in His Will and Testament not only to adopt it unreservedly, but to unveil its merit to all the world. To attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and

implications. But one word of warning must be uttered in this connection. Let us be on our guard lest we measure too strictly the Divine Plan with the standard of men. I am not prepared to state that it agrees in principle or in method with the prevailing notions now uppermost in men's minds, nor that it should conform with those imperfect, precarious, and expedient measures feverishly resorted to by agitated humanity. Are we to doubt that the ways of God are not necessarily the ways of man? Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, wholehearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world?

Pending the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, whose function it is to lay more definitely the broad lines that must guide the future activities and administration of the Movement, it is clearly our duty to strive to obtain as clear a view as possible of the manner in which to conduct the affairs of the Cause, and then arise with single-mindedness and determination to adopt and maintain it in all our activities and labors.

At this time we have the benefit of many subsequent interpretations by Shoghi Effendi and also the initial guidance of the Universal House of Justice, which will continue to elucidate aspects of this mighty system as it unfolds. In striving to attain a "clearer and fuller understanding" of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, we need to contemplate the operation of the Bahá'í principles of governance and social responsibility as they persist through changing sets of conditions, from the present time when the Bahá'í community constitutes a small number of people living in a variety of overwhelmingly non-Bahá'í societies, to the far different situation in future centuries when the Bahá'ís are becoming, and eventually have become, the vast majority of the people.

The Administrative Order is certainly the nucleus and pattern of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, but it is in embryonic form, and must undergo major evolutionary developments in the course of time. Certain passages in the writings on this subject establish matters of principle, certain ones describe the ultimate goal of the Most Great Peace, and certain of them relate to stages of development on the way to the attainment of that goal. For example, in this familiar passage in His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that

through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.

In response to a question about the "government" in the above passage, Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf, on 18 April 1941, the following clarification:

By "Government" … is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation.

The same relationship between legislature and executive is expressed in the well-known passage in "The Unfoldment of World Civilization," showing how one principle is applied over successive periods.

A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth.

In relation to other international institutions, the Guardian has given the following guidance:

Touching the point raised in the Secretary's letter regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit Instructions, all important fundamental questions must be referred.

In his letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada written on 27 February 1929, Shoghi Effendi stated:

Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power. And as the Bahá'í Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth all the rights, the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon the world's future superstate.

Complementing these words are the Guardian's repeated and forceful requirement that Bahá'ís strictly abstain from involvement in politics. This requirement has far-reaching implications for the method by which Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order will evolve into His World Order. We

can consider, for example, the well-known passage in his letter of 21 March 1932 to the Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada:

Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions.… Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.…

… Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals.

As one studies these words, one begins to understand the processes at work in the gradual unfoldment and establishment of the Bahá'í System.

Clearly the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth is a "political" enterprise, and the Teachings of the Faith are filled with "political" principles—using the word in the sense of the science of government and of the organization of human society. At the same time the Bahá'í world community repeatedly and emphatically denies being a "political" organization, and Bahá'ís are required, on pain of deprivation of their administrative rights, to refrain from becoming involved in "political" matters and from taking sides in "political" disputes. In other words, the Bahá'ís are following a completely different path from that usually followed by those who wish to reform society. They eschew political methods towards the achievement of their aims, and concentrate on revitalizing the hearts, minds and behavior of people and on presenting a working model as evidence of the reality and practicality of the way of life they propound.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order is the "nucleus and pattern" of the divinely intended future political system of the world, and undoubtedly non-Bahá'í governments will benefit from learning how this system works and from adopting its procedures and principles in overcoming the problems they face. Nevertheless, this Administration is primarily the framework and structure designed to be a channel for the flow of the spirit of the Cause and for the application of its Teachings. As the Guardian wrote:

It is surely for those to whose hands so priceless a heritage has been committed to prayerfully watch lest the tool should supersede the Faith itself, lest undue concern for the minute details

arising from the administration of the Cause obscure the vision of its promoters, lest partiality, ambition, and worldliness tend in the course of time to becloud the radiance, stain the purity, and impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

The gradual process of the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order into the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has been described by Shoghi Effendi in many of his writings, as in the following excerpt from his letter of 30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference:

This present Crusade, on the threshold of which we now stand, will, moreover, by virtue of the dynamic forces it will release and its wide repercussions over the entire surface of the globe, contribute effectually to the acceleration of yet another process of tremendous significance which will carry the steadily evolving Faith of Bahá'u'lláh through its present stages of obscurity, of repression, of emancipation and of recognition—stages one or another of which Bahá'í national communities in various parts of the world now find themselves—to the stage of establishment, the stage at which the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh will be recognized by the civil authorities as the State Religion, similar to that which Christianity entered in the years following the death of the Emperor Constantine, a stage which must later be followed by the emergence of the Bahá'í state itself, functioning, in all religious and civil matters, in strict accordance with the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy, the Mother-Book of the Bahá'í Revelation, a stage which, in the fullness of time, will culminate in the establishment of the World Bahá'í Commonwealth, functioning in the plenitude of its powers, and which will signalize the long-awaited advent of the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth—the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh—mirroring however faintly upon this humble handful of dust the glories of the Abhá Kingdom.

In answer to those who raise objections to this vision of a worldwide commonwealth inspired by a Divine Revelation, fearing for the freedom of minority groups or of the individual under such a system, we can explain the Bahá'í principle of upholding the rights of minorities and fostering their interests. We can also point to the fact that no person is ever compelled to accept the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and moreover, unlike the situation in certain other religions, each person has complete freedom to withdraw from the Faith if he decides that he no longer believes in its Founder or accepts His Teachings. In light of these facts alone it is evident that the growth of the Bahá'í communities to the size where a non-Bahá'í state would adopt the Faith as the State Religion, let alone to the point at which the State would accept the Law of God as its own law and the National House of Justice as its legislature, must be a supremely voluntary and democratic process.

As the Universal House of Justice wrote in its letter of 21 July 1968 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States:

It is not our purpose to impose Bahá'í teachings upon others by persuading the powers that be to enact laws enforcing Bahá'í principles, nor to join movements which have such legislation as their aim. The guidance that Bahá'í institutions offer to mankind does not comprise a series of specific answers to current problems, but rather the illumination of an entirely new way of life. Without this way of life the problems are insoluble; with it they will either not arise or, if they arise, can be resolved.

Two quotations from the writings of the Guardian bear particularly on these principles of the rights and prerogatives of minorities and of individuals. In The Advent of Divine Justice is a passage which is of fundamental significance for Bahá'í constitutional law:

Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New, who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious, or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it.

As for the protection of the rights of individuals, there is the following translation of a forceful passage which appears in a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Iran, written in July 1925, in relation to a situation involving a Covenant-breaker:

… the mere fact of disaffection, estrangement, or recantation of belief, can in no wise detract from, or otherwise impinge upon, the legitimate civil rights of individuals in a free society, be it to the most insignificant degree. Were the friends to follow other than this course, it would be tantamount to a reversion on their part, in this century of radiance and light, to the ways and standards of a former age: they would reignite in men's breasts the fire of bigotry and blind fanaticism, cut themselves off from the glorious bestowals of this promised Day of God, and impede the full flow of divine assistance in this wondrous age.

All Bahá'ís, and especially those who make a profound study of the Cause, need to grasp the differences between the Bahá'í concepts of governance and those of the past, and to abstain from measuring Bahá'í institutions and methods against the faulty man-made institutions and methods hitherto current in the world. The Guardian graphically stressed these differences in his letter of 8 February 1934, known as "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh":

The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islam—none of these can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.

Among the many complementary Teachings in the Faith which resolve the dilemmas of past societies are those of the unity of mankind on the one hand, and loyalty to the Covenant on the other. As already mentioned, no one in this Dispensation is compelled to be a Bahá'í, and the division of humankind into the "clean" and the "unclean," the "faithful" and the "infidels," is abolished. At the same time, anyone who does choose to be a Bahá'í accepts the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and, while free expression of opinion within the Bahá'í community is encouraged, this cannot ever be permitted to degenerate to the level of undermining the Covenant, for this would vitiate the very purpose of the Revelation itself.

One of the major concerns of the Universal House of Justice, as the Bahá'í Administrative Order unfolds, will be to ensure that it evolves in consonance with the spirit of the Bahá'í Revelation. While many beneficial aspects of human society at large can be safely incorporated into Bahá'í Administration, the House of Justice will guard against the corrupting influence of those non-Bahá'í political and social concepts and practices which are not in harmony with the divine standard.

The House of Justice appreciates your concern about such a fundamental issue, and asks us to assure you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of your services to the Cause of God.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

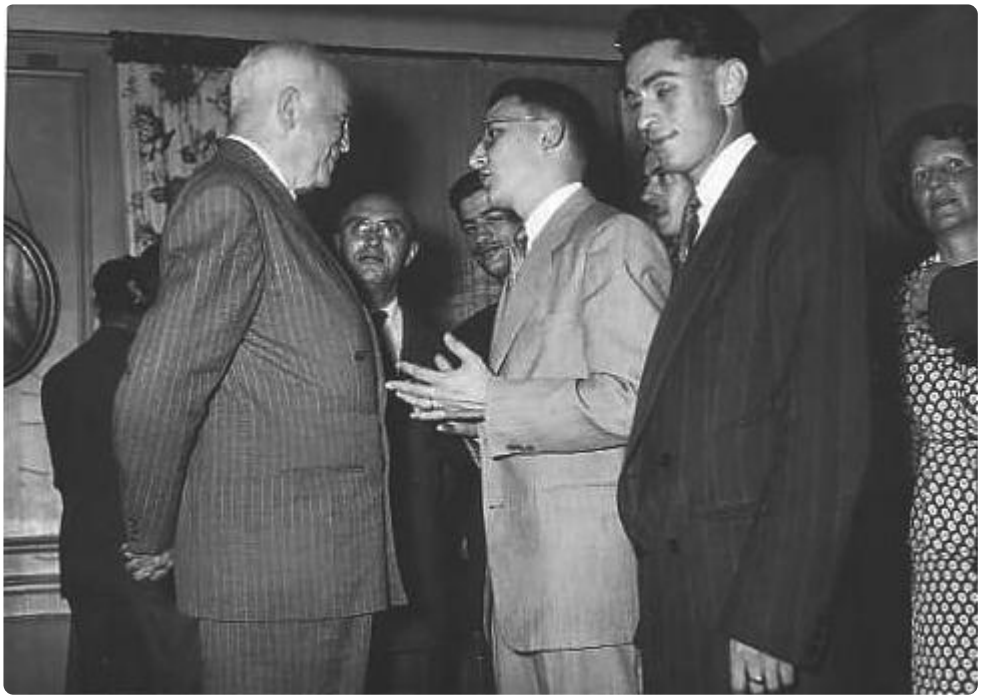
THEOCRACY
EXPANDED
HIERARCH
COURTS
PRIESTHOOD
SOVEREIGN
ASPECTS
MARRIAGE
TEMPORALLY
STATEHOOD
ECCLESIASTIC
JURE
RULE
OFFICIALPRIESTLY
SODOMY
POLICE
LAWS
THEOCRATIC
SYSTEM
PROPHET
CABAL
POLYGAMY
SECULAR
POLITICAL
PETITIONED
POWER
HIERARCHY
CLERICS
NOVELLA
DEITY
DIVINE
MONASTIC
COMMUNITIES
SATIRICAL
AUTHORITY
THEOCRACY
ELECT
RECOGNIZED
FACTO
REINCARNATED
EXILE
STATES
RELIGIOUS
PROTO
HELD
GOVERNMENT
STATE
CONTROL
POPE
CHURCH
LAW
ABORTIVE
MONARCHY
CIVIL
MILITARY
TEMPORAL
DICTATORSHIP
ADMINISTRATIVE
LEADER
REPUBLIC
NARRATIONS
GOVERNED
ELITES
DEIFIED
DOCTRINE
REVELATION
APPOINTED
AUTOCHTHONOUS
INCARNATION
MEANING

Comments

APRIL 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1960, THE CUSTODIANS CABLED THE CONTINENTAL HANDS AND ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES REGARDING "HAND (OF THE) CAUSE MASON REMEY NOW ASSERTING HE IS GUARDIAN (OF THE) FAITH."

April 28. On this date in 1960, the Custodians cabled the Continental Hands and all National Spiritual Assemblies regarding "Hand (of the) Cause Mason Remey now asserting he is Guardian (of the) Faith."

> To the Continental Hands and All National Spiritual Assemblies
>
> APRIL 28, 1960
>
> DEEPLY REGRET NECESSITY INFORM BAHA'I WORLD HAND CAUSE MASON REMEY NOW ASSERTING HE IS GUARDIAN FAITH STOP THIS PREPOSTEROUS CLAIM CLEARLY CONTRARY SACRED TEXTS CAN ONLY BE REGARDED AS EVIDENCE CONDITION PROFOUND EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE STOP CALL UPON BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE JOIN HANDS HOLY LAND COMPLETE REPUDIATION MS MISGUIDED ACTION STOP SHARE THIS MESSAGE FRIENDS.
>
> [CABLE]
>
> HANDS HOLY LAND



Comments

APRIL 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1918, AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN STAR OF THE WEST (VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3) TITLED "THE STERLING FAITHFULNESS OF ESFANDAYAR, STORY TOLD BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: FROM THE DIARY OF MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB, OCTOBER 25, 1913" RECOUNTING THE STORY OF A SLAVE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH INHERITED FROM MÍRZÁ BUZURG.

April 28. On this date in 1918, an article appeared in Star of the West (volume 9, number 3, pages 38-39) titled "The Sterling Faithfulness of Esfandayar, Story told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913" recounting the story of a slave Bahá'u'lláh inherited from Mírzá Buzurg.

> The Sterling Faithfulness of Esfandayar
>
> Story told by Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913
>
> MY grandfather had many colored maids and servants. When the Blessed Perfection became the head of the family he liberated all of them, and gave them permission to leave or stay, but if they desired to remain it would, of course, be in a different manner. However, all of them, revelling in their newfound freedom preferred to leave, except Esfandayar, who remained in the household and continued to serve us with proverbial faithfulness and chastity. Then when Baha'o'llah became known as a Babi, and he was teaching many people, the populace rose against him, and with the tacit consent of the government, our house was pillaged and ransacked. My father was put into prison and we were persecuted on all sides. For days the rabble in their fanatical fury and rage threw stones into our house, broke the windows and damaged everything. At that time I was probably six or seven years old. Everybody had left us, and our family then consisted of my mother, my sister (the Greatest Holy Leaf) and Agha Mussa. Fearing that the stones thrown into the house might hit one of us, my mother set out and rented a small house in an entirely different quarter of the city, and for fear of recognition she carried us safely to our new, humble quarters by night.
>
> On the other hand, the enemies of my father, who had poisoned the mind of the Shah by saying that he harbored secret plans against the throne, were convinced that Esfandayar was the guardian of all the secret plans of Baha'o'llah. Therefore,

they imagined that if once they laid their hands on Esfandayar they would force out of him everything, and then be able to substantiate their vague accusations with these solid facts. Hence they commissioned one hundred and fifty policemen to find him and bring him before them. Esfandayar had a chum with whom he passed most of his time. At first they tried to get hold of his chum, thus he might divulge the hiding-place of Esfandayar, but they failed in their purpose.

One midnight we were roused out of our sleep by a loud knocking at the door. It was opened, and lo, and behold, it was Esfandayar. My mother said to him with anxiety: "How is it that thou art yet in the city? Dost thou not know that there are one hundred and fifty policemen after thee? Fly as quickly as thou canst. If they get hold of thee, thy life will be in danger." But he smiled and answered: "No, I will not leave Teheran, even if an hundred or a thousand policemen are after me. I am not afraid. I have many debts in the bazaar. I owe money to many shopkeepers, and before I leave this city I must pay off all the debts. I do not want the people to say afterward that the negro servant of Baha'o'llah escaped without paying his debts." Then he left us, and for one month and a half he walked in broad daylight in the streets and bazaars, and finally succeeded in clearing off all his financial obligations. All this time the policemen were after him, but could not catch him. Then, one night he appeared again, and said: "I am now free. I have actually paid all my debts and will leave the city with a clear conscience." He went to Mazandaran, and the governor, who was not a Bahai, engaged him in his service, made him the chief of his equerry and protected him from the pursuit of his enemies. Years lapsed, and the governor, being a religious man, desired to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Karbala. Naturally, he took with him Esfandayar, who by this time had grown so much in his favor that he could not bear to be separated from him. When they reached the city of Bagdad, Esfandayar was overjoyed to stand again in the presence of Baha'o'llah, because he loved him most intensely. He requested Baha'o'llah to keep him, saying that he would rather leave the governor and serve his old master. But Baha'o'llah said to him: "You must act in this matter in accord with the wish of the governor. You owe him a debt of deep gratitude, because at a time when your life was in danger, he gave you a position and stopped the persecution of your enemies. Now, if he is willing to have you remain with us, we will accept you; otherwise you must continue to serve him with the same zeal and sincerity that you have served us in the past."

> Esfandayar went to the governor and explained his case. He answered: "It is impossible. I cannot find in this wide world another man as honest and faithful as thyself. Thou must continue to stay with me. I have grown to love thee and will do everything to add to thy comfort and happiness." Of course Esfandayar was heartbroken over this decision, but he had to abide by the decision of the Blessed Perfection. He in turn consoled him with his blessings showered upon him. Esfandayar returned to Mazandaran with the governor and stayed with him until his last day.
>
> Such was the sterling faithfulness of Esfandayar that whenever I think of him, my eyes grow dim with tears. He was a king among men, a glorious star in the heaven of humanity. Although his face was black, his heart was white as the snow. He was peerless and had no equal. I cannot sufficiently praise him. I love him. He was a glory and a jewel on the crown of the colored race, for his life was a noble record of proud achievement, and the whole world may learn a lesson from it.

Further references to these slaves are provided in the Universal House of Justice's letter titled "Servants in the Households of Baha'u'llah and the Bab," dated February 2, 2000...

Servants in the Households of Baha'u'llah and the Bab by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 2000-02-02 MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice From: Research Department Date: 2 February 2000

The Research Department has considered the questions raised by Mr. Peter Terry, in his email message of 2 December 1999. Mr. Terry states that on some Internet discussion groups there is a discussion on the personal status of Mubarak, Isfandiyar and other Ethiopian servants in the households of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh (and other believers). Mr. Terry ... states that "it has been alleged that the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice deliberately concealed" information on the status of the servants. Mr. Terry requests that he be sent information relevant to the above, or that a statement be prepared by the Research Department "in response to these allegations". We reply as follows.

By way of introduction, we note that, as Mr. Terry is no doubt aware, the Bahá'í Faith is the first religion to explicitly ban slavery in its Sacred Scripture. Bahá'u'lláh prohibited this practice in clear and un-ambiguous language. In the Kitab-i-Aqdas (paragraph 72), it is stated: It is forbidden you to trade in slaves, be they men or women. It is not for him who is himself a servant to buy another of God's servants, and this hath been prohibited in His Holy Tablet. Thus, by His mercy, hath the commandment been recorded by the Pen of justice. Let no man

exalt himself above another; all are but bondslaves before the Lord, and all exemplify the truth that there is none other God but Him. He, verily, is the All-Wise, Whose wisdom encompasseth all things. Returning to Mr. Terry's questions regarding the lives of servants of African descent in the households of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab, we note that very little is known on the subject, and the information available is highly fragmentary and anecdotal in nature. Currently, the only work on this subject is Abu'l-Qasim Afnan's Black Pearls: Servants in the Households of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1988). In addition, we have found references to servants of the Holy Family in the following works: The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1995). On pages 426-427, 'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts the services of Isfandiyar, and praises his character and his loyalty to the Holy Family.

The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1996). Several references to Mubarak are found in this work, including his role in the first days of the Declaration of the Bab and his services to the Bab during His pilgrimage to Mecca. See pages 53-54, 62, 66, 68, 96, 129, 132-133 and 148.

An article entitled "The Sterling Faithfulness of Esfandayar [sic], Story told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913" appears in Star of the West, volume 9 (April 28, 1918), number 3 (pages 38-39), and recounts the services of Isfandiyar to the Holy Family, his character and the love of 'Abdu'l-Bahá for him.

The Chosen Highway (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1967) contains recollections of the Greatest Holy Leaf concerning the loyalty to the Holy Family of Isfandiyar and a woman of African descent (pages 41 and 43).

Mahmud's Diary: The Diary of Mirza Mahmud-i-Zarqani Chronicling 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey to America (Oxford: George Ronald, 1998) contains two remarks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising Isfandiyar (pages 367, 384).

A Gift of Love Offered to the Greatest Holy Leaf (Gloria Faizi, 1982), by Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, includes a brief summary of the character of Isfandiyar and his services to the Holy Family (pages 14-16). Specifically, with respect to the "personal status" of the servants of the families of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab, we note below, for the benefit of Mr. Terry, a few observations from a perusal of the sources mentioned above: All the above accounts testify to the love and affection that existed between the families of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab, on the one hand, and the servants in their households, and to the consideration shown to the servants. The relationship seems to transcend those ordinarily encountered in master-servant interactions.

The only reference to the legal status of the servants in the household of the Bab is in Black Pearls, where Abu'l-Qasim Afnan states that Mubarak and a female servant named Fiddih were acquired by the Bab (pages 4-5, 21). Afnan further states that "the bill of purchase" for Mubarak "still exists among the Bab's business accounts." We note that this document is not held in the Archives at the Bahá'í World Centre, and this matter will no doubt be researched further in the future.

We have found no indication that any of the servants in the household of Bahá'u'lláh were slaves. The only information we have found on this subject is the following extract from a talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá published in Star of the West, mentioned above: My grandfather had many colored maids and servants. When the Blessed Perfection became the head of the family he liberated all of them, and gave them permission to leave or stay, but if they desired to remain it would, of course, be in a different manner. However, all of them, revelling in their new found freedom preferred to leave, except Esfandayar [sic], who remained in the household and continued to serve us with proverbial faithfulness and chastity. (Star of the West, volume 9 (April 28, 1928), number 3, page 38) With regard to the suggestion that information on the servants in the households of Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab has been deliberately concealed: Of course, there can be no basis for such an allegation, which is so far removed from the teachings and spirit of the Faith. As Mr. Terry can well appreciate, the Research Department is not able to respond to such general allegations, without reference to any instances that may have given rise to the perception that information concerning the servants was withheld.

Comments

APRIL 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1938, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED ABOUT THE DEATH OF HIS GRANDMOTHER MUNIRIH KHANUM (WIFE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ). BY THE TIME OF HIS DEATH IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI HAD DECLARED ALL OF MUNIRIH KHANUM'S GRANDCHILDREN, MEANING ALL OF HIS SIBLINGS AND FIRST COUSINS, COVENANT-BREAKERS.

April 28. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable to the Bahá'ís of the world announcing the passing of his maternal grandmother Munirih Khanum (wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá) and calling for the suspension of Ridvan festivities. By the time of his death in 1957, Shoghi Effendi had declared all of Munirih Khanum's grandchildren, including all of his siblings and first cousins, Covenant-breakers.

> 28 April 1938
>
> BAHA'I WORLD MOURNS LOSS HOLY MOTHER MUNIRIH KHANUM STOP RIDVAN FESTIVITIES SUSPENDED. ADVISE ALL CENTRES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS COMMEMORATE HER OUTSTANDING SERVICES RENDERED DURING ONE OF MOST CRITICAL STAGES IN EVOLUTION BELOVED FAITH.
>
> SHOGHI

Comments

APRIL 28. ON THIS DATE IN 2001, FARZAM ARBAB GAVE A TALK TITLED "INTENSIVE GROWTH PROGRAMS" AS PART OF A TWO-DAY SEMINAR ON THE FIVE YEAR PLAN SPONSORED BY THE YOUTH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE AT THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE.

April 28. On this date in 2001, Farzam Arbab gave a talk titled "Intensive Growth Programs" as part of a two-day seminar on the Five Year Plan sponsored by the Youth Activities Committee at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Born in Tehran, Iran on October 27, 1941, **Farzam Arbab** would go on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College in 1964 and a Doctor of Philosophy in physics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1968. Shortly after earning his doctorate, Arbab moved to Colombia where he quickly established himself in the leadership in the Bahá'í community of that country and by 1970 was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. While in Colombia he helped found Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC).

Initially elected in 1993 to the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, Farzam Arbab retired from that body in 2013. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 1988, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith. All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In 1980 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in the Americas, on which he served for eight years. From 1970 until 1980 he served as the Chairman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia. In 1980, while still a Counsellor, Arbab was on the initial board of directors for the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í School in Haiti.

Farzam Arbab's son, **Paul Arbab**, is administrator at the Luxembourg-based Unity Foundation, which works with Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and "a network of local development agencies assisting them in their efforts to build capacity amongst populations to take charge of their own social and economic development." "Born in the US, Paul grew up in

Colombia. He holds an MBA and joined the board of Unity Foundation in January 2007. Since then he has been able to provide valuable input to the strategic direction of the Foundation. He is a proud father of two toddlers and strongly believes in the power of education." Unity Foundation is "governed by a board of directors which regularly meets to consult on the strategic direction of the organization. The day-to-day work is being carried out by the office team. Our external consultancy body, the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) in Haifa, Israel connects us to grass-root development agencies which have the capacity to work with external funding organization. OSED and the [Luxembourg] Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as two filters ensuring the quality and integrity of our projects."

Farzam Arbab's sister, **Haleh Arbab**, is currently director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a non-profit educational and research organization "dedicated to building capacity in individuals, groups and institutions to contribute to prevalent discourses concerned with the betterment of society" through "working in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community." Born in Iran and educated in the United States, Haleh Arbab previously lived in Colombia from 1982 to 2005 where she worked with the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC) and served as Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural, a Colombian Bahá'í-inspired institute she helped found in 1988.

Farzam Arbab's brother-in-law, Haleh Arbab's husband, is **Gustavo Correa** who himself has been a member of the Universal House of Justice since 2008. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 2005, Correa was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

Farzam Arab's niece, **Bita Correa**, is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. Aside from being FUNDAEC's current program director, Bita Correa participated as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development. A recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, Bita Correa is the daughter of Haleh Arbab, Farzam Arbab's sister, and Gustavo Correa.

Farzam Arbab was one of the founders of FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences). He served as its Director from 1974 through 1988 and continues to serve on its board. FUNDAEC was established in 1974 by a group of professors at the University of Valle in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country. In 2002, the Club of

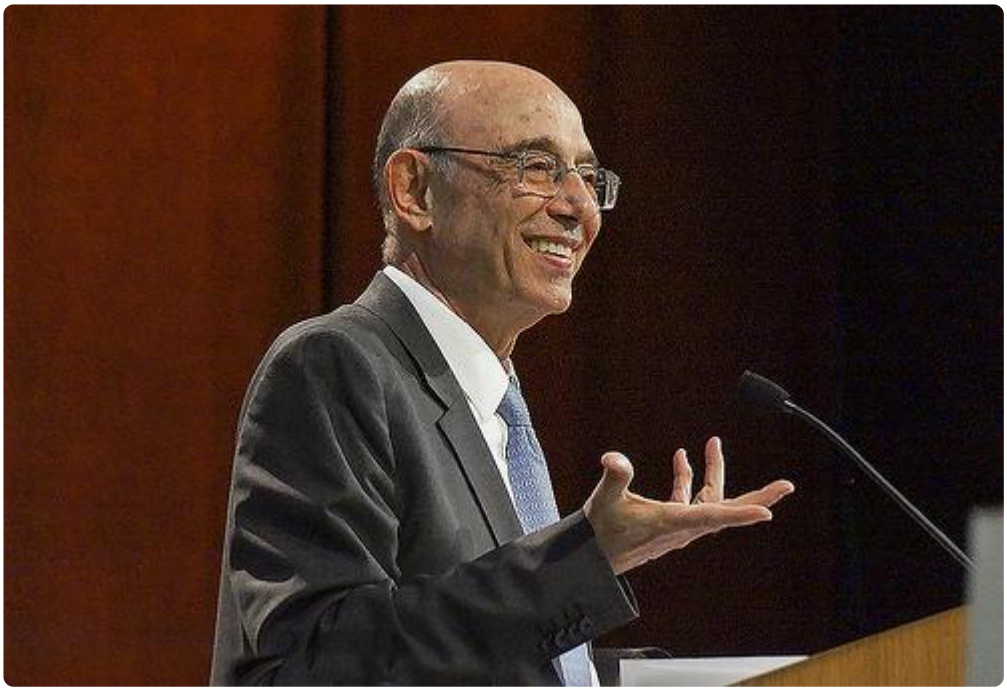
Budapest recognized FUNDAEC's new rural education model. The model, known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, Spanish for "System for Tutorial Learning") started in 1980 and centers on the use of interactive workbooks facilitated by a tutor. In Colombia, these tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education.

The SAT techniques Arbab helped develop at FUNDAEC have been applied to the Bahá'í community in the form of the Ruhi Institute, which was named after Arbab's father. Centered on Bahá'í study circles, the goal of the Ruhi Institute courses is to "evoke a transformative learning experience through a learner-centered, experiential, and collaborative approach facilitated by a tutor rather than an instructor, a teacher, or an expert." Among the principles of the Ruhi curriculum is the utilization of service projects to implement learning into tangible action.

The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the emulation of the Ruhi model throughout the global Bahá'í community. According to one researcher, the Ruhi Institute's method has resulted in "nonhierarchical, self-initiated, self-organized small groups engaged in study, teaching, and action" and is "becoming the core of Bahá'í community life worldwide as the outcome of a process that has sought to nurture the spiritual life of individuals and families and to establish social foundations for the vision and practice of religious world citizenship." Paul Lample, another member of the Universal Hose of Justice, has stated "Doubtless the institute and its curriculum will continue to evolve, both in content and form, to a level of greater complexity in regions and nations within the framework of the administrative order throughout the various stages of the Divine Plan in the second century of the Formative Age."

For a number of years now, Unity Foundation has collaborated with FUNDAEC and "since June 2013, Unity Foundation has renewed its collaboration with FUNDAEC."

On September 25, 2020, Farzam Arbab died in San Diego, California.



Comments

APRIL 28. ON THIS DATE IN 2003, HADI AFSAHI DIED. A NOTABLE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í, HE PIONEERED TO SWEDEN, WHERE HE SERVED ON THE INAUGURAL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AND LATER AS AN AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER FOR THE CONTINENTAL BOARD OF COUNSELLORS FOR EUROPE.

April 28. On this date in 2003, Hadi Afsahi died. A notable Iranian Bahá'í, he pioneered to Sweden, where he served on the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly and later as an Auxiliary Board member for the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe.

A fourth generation Bahá'í, Hadi Afsahi was born on April 15, 1924 in Tehran, Iran, and received his early education at the Bahá'í Tarbíyat School in that city. After earning a degree in civil engineering from the University of Tehran he worked with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from 1947 to 1959 and pioneered to two different localities within the country. Mr. Afsahi was a member of the first Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Iranian cities of Masjid-i-Sulayman and Gachsaran. He married Mehri Golmohammadi in 1953, and the couple had two children, May and Aram. In January 1960, Mr. Afsahi left Iran for Sweden, settling in Uppsala, a pioneer goal city, to be joined several months later by his family. In Sweden, he served as a member of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Uppsala and was also a member of the country's National Teaching Committee from 1960 to 1967. Elected as a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sweden, he served on that body from 1962 until 1968, when he was appointed as a member of the Auxiliary Board of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe, in which capacity he served until 1993.

Mr. Afsahi made many trips throughout Sweden and internationally to teach the Bahá'í Faith. Within Sweden, he was active in teaching minority groups such as the Roma people and the native Sámi people of Lapland. During his years in Sweden Mr. Afsahi worked as a high school teacher of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, until his retirement in 1989. He was also involved with the United Nations Association and the National Sámi Organization.

Hadi Afsahi died on April 28, 2003. In its message after his passing, the Universal House of Justice wrote of his "long-serving and steadfast devotion, his warm and radiant spirit, and his indefatigable dedication to the teaching work," which it "recalled with deep gratitude".

Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE BRITISH BAHÁ'ÍS THAT "GREAT PATIENCE MUST BE USED IN DEALING WITH THE CHILD-LIKE MEMBERS OF SOME OF THESE PRIMITIVE RACES."

April 29. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote British Bahá'ís that "great patience must be used in dealing with the child-like members of some of these primitive races."

> 29 April 1948
>
> Dear Bahá'í Brother,
>
> Your letters to our beloved Guardian, written on behalf of the British N.S.A., and dated as follows: Oct 20th, 22nd, 24th and 29th, Nov. 10th and 17th, Dec. 1st and 15th of 1947, and Jan. 13th, Feb. 8th, 9th, 13th, and 27th, and March 1st and 4th of 1948 and April 5th, 1948, together with various enclosures, have been received, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.
>
> A number of matters referred to in them have been answered by cable, so I will not go into them again.
>
> He was specially pleased to receive the copies of the Tablet of the Master to Andrew Carnegie, as this is yet another authentic and interesting Bahá'í document.
>
> He was, likewise, very pleased to receive the statement of Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar testifying to his appreciation of the Faith, and he will use it in the appropriate section of "Bahá'í World" in the forthcoming edition.
>
> The instruction he gave to the effect that committees should elect their own officers, he feels, is universal in scope and should, therefore, apply to Great Britain as well....
>
> Regarding the matter of the budget of the N.S.A. he feels that both wisdom and courage is required in this matter. You should not fix a budget which is too heavy for the community to meet, even with sacrifice. Both the pressing needs of the Cause and your Plan, as well as the foreseeable possibilities of your income should guide you.

He has no objection to extracts from his letters to ... being published. He feels that in the future it is not necessary to ask his permission to publish such extracts. As long as the person who has received a letter, such as he would wish to share with others, from the Guardian, has no objection to its publication, he has no objection either. Anything confidential he always specifies as being such.

He feels that the question of Mrs. Hofman giving up the secretaryship of the National Teaching Committee, and who is to be chairman of it, etc. is something to be decided there by those responsible for the work.

In one of your letters you mentioned some ... who have visited the London Centre and their attitude: great patience must be used in dealing with the child-like members of some of these primitive races. They are innocent in heart and have certainly had a very bad example, in many Christians, of a purely mercenary approach to religion, but if their hearts and minds once become illumined with the Faith they could make very fine believers.

Regarding the matter of **believers who have been deprived of their voting rights**: just as no one should ever be deprived of his voting right lightly, it should likewise be realised that to be deprived of it is a grave matter, and involves heavy penalties spiritually. People who have been so deprived should not be permitted to attend any meetings involving the administration of the Cause, such as an election or a 19 Day Feast. They can attend the 9 Holy Days, however; **they should not be married by Bahá'í law, no money should be accepted from them, they should not be given credentials (which imply a member of the community in good standing) nor should they be used officially as teachers or speakers**.

He has no objection to your getting out a book on Bahá'í Procedure similar to the synopsis you enclosed for his information. He wishes you, however, to stick to essentials and, as far as possible, avoid--not only in the book but in your Assembly's decisions--binding the friends by a lot of procedure on minor matters which he always urges should be, as much as possible, dealt with according to each case that comes up. He wishes to keep the administration of the Cause as flexible as possible and not impede the work by a codified set of rules.

As to the attitude of the Bahá'ís in the British Isles towards the World Government Movement: he thinks that as this Movement, so far, seems to be working for what we believe in, and not for anything we do not subscribe to, the Bahá'ís should by all

means support it, vote for the representatives to be sent to its constituent Assembly in 1950, and stand for election if they wish to. However, he feels your Assembly should keep a careful watch on this Movement, and if it becomes in any way imperialistic, anti-Russian, or in any other field starts sponsoring attitudes partizan or political in nature, the believers should be advised to withdraw their support and help. He does not think your Assembly should take any initiative in this Movement outside of its jurisdiction, such as in the Middle East, through asking the friends to send in non-Bahá'í names, etc.

He does not advise you to try and create more than one Assembly, i.e. the present one, in the London area.

The work being accomplished in the British Isles is not only a source of pride to him, but is increasingly being recognised and admired by the Bahá'í communities throughout the World, and is greatly encouraging them in their own struggles. For people are prone to thinking that the American Bahá'ís accomplish so much solely because of the great advantages they enjoy in their very fortunate country, whereas now the friends, knowing full well how much England suffered during the war, and is still suffering, are forced to acknowledge that it is spirit, determination, faith and devotion which bring victories into being, one after another, in Britain, and not luxury and leisure. Your achievements are heartening the friends in many places where their numbers are few, and the obstacles to be overcome great! In fact the American Bahá'ís who have visited England feel there is much to be copied at home in your spirit and methods.

He, therefore, urges you all to persevere courageously, knowing what you are accomplishing is infinitely precious and great. You are witnessing with your own eyes the fruition of your plans, the nearing of the moment when your hopes will be fully realised.

He assures you all of his very loving prayers on your behalf, and for the speedy progress of your work.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The successful conclusion of the Initial Phase of the first collective enterprise launched by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the British Isles during the first year of the second Bahá'í century constitutes a milestone of the utmost significance on the

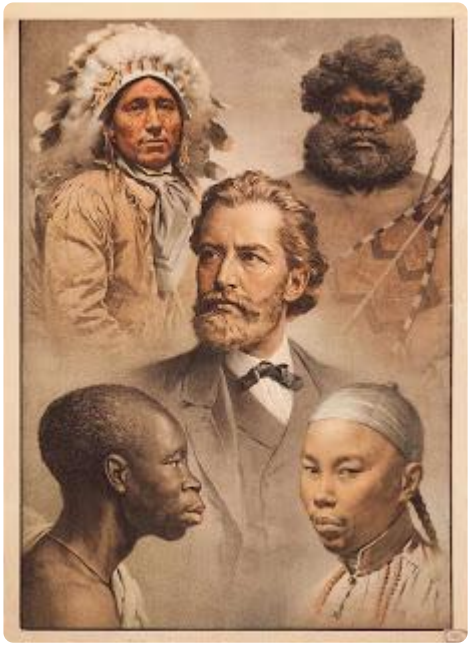
road leading the British Bahá'í community to the glorious destiny ordained for them by Divine Providence. The efforts exerted, the magnitude of the success which has been achieved, the spirit of consecration that has been demonstrated, the solidarity, determination and perseverance evinced by individuals, groups and assemblies during the opening years of this century are indeed unprecedented in British Bahá'í history, and may be regarded next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's twice repeated visit to the British Isles, as the most potent period in the annals of the British Bahá'í community. The establishment of the structural basis of the Administrative Order of the Faith in Scotland, Wales and Eire--an accomplishment of tremendous spiritual significance in itself--has greatly enhanced the momentous character of this period, and will lend a mighty impetus to the evolution of the Faith in the days to come.

The Final Phase of the Plan must now be carried forward with still greater energy, with still nobler self-sacrifice, with a clearer vision of the historic import of the work which is to be accomplished, with a mightier determination to bring it to a successful conclusion. The resources at the disposal of the community must, as a result of its expansion, be continually augmented and carefully extended. The prizes so painstakingly won must, at all costs, be safeguarded and consolidated. The newly enrolled believers must be constantly encouraged to assume an increasing share of the responsibilities and of the administrative functions devolving upon the members of the community. The pioneer activities undertaken by its members must, however great the sacrifices involved, be increasingly developed, systematised and accelerated. The needs of the Faith in the newly opened territories in the west, in the north, and in the south, must, while the specific goals of the Plan are being pursued, be given special attention, in order to enrich the life of the entire community, to increase the diversity of its constituent elements, to demonstrate the welding and assimilative power of the Faith, and to stimulate the processes now set in motion for the spiritual regeneration of all the ethnic elements within the British Isles.

In token of my gratitude for the work already accomplished, as a recognition of the status achieved by the British Bahá'í community in the Western Hemisphere, in anticipation of the tasks that still remain to be undertaken, I feel moved to initiate, as soon as the situation here permits, measures that will enable me, through the institution of a Palestine Branch of the British Bahá'í National Assembly, to register

in the name of the body of the elected representatives of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the British Isles, a portion of Bahá'í international endowments dedicated to the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. May this step, associating it with its sister national assemblies in the United States and India in the possession of so sacred a trust, lend its share to the consolidation and distinction of the central institution of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the British Isles.

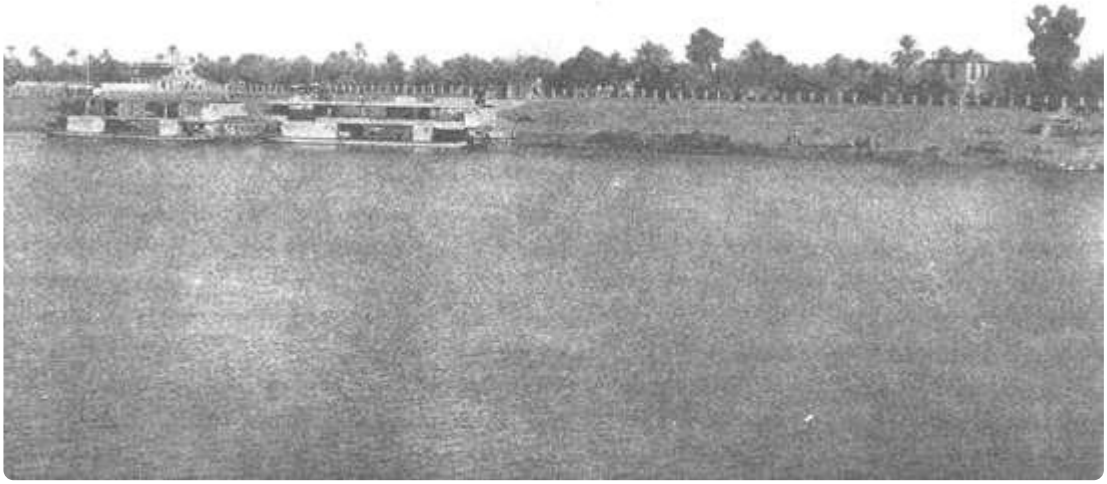
Shoghi



Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1863, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S FAMILY JOINED HIM IN THE NAJIBIYYIH GARDEN IN BAGHDAD IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR JOURNEY TO ISTANBUL. BECAUSE OF INCREASING BÁBI HARASSMENT OF SHI'ITE PILGRIMS, THE QAJAR GOVERNMENT ASKED FOR THE BÁBI LEADERSHIP BASED IN BAGHDAD TO BE EXTRADITED ...

April 29. On this date in 1863, Bahá'u'lláh's family joined him in the Najibiyyih Garden in Baghdad in preparation for their journey to Istanbul. Because of increasing Bábi harassment of Shi'ite pilgrims, the Qajar government asked for the Bábi leadership based in Baghdad to be extradited to Iran, but the Ottoman government refused and instead chose to move them from the sensitive border. In 1870, during his visit to Iraq, the Najibiyyij Garden served as a guest house for Naser al-Din Shah, who was responsible for Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment and exile. The location of the gardens today is the Baghdad Medical City, a large complex of teaching hospitals.



Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1905 'ALÍ-AKBAR FURÚTAN WAS BORN. 'ALÍ-AKBAR FURÚTAN SERVED ON THE NSA OF IRAN IN 1934, AS A HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD AND AS ONE OF THE NINE CUSTODIANS. HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN CENSORING AND SILENCING ALTERNATIVE VOICES WITHIN THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, SUCH AS...

April 29. On this date in 1905 'Alí-Akbar Furútan was born. 'Alí-Akbar Furútan was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran in 1934, serving as its secretary until 1957. In December 1951 he was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. From 1959 to 1963 he served as one of the nine Custodians at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Furútan was instrumental in censoring and silencing alternative voices within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, such as the academic works of (devout Bahá'í scholar) Jinab-i Fadil.

In the linked video, Rahmatu'llah Muhájir interviews 'Alí-Akbar Furútan about Shoghi Effendi.

'Alí-Akbar Furútan's daughter, Írán Furútan, married Rahmatu'llah Muhájir, a prominent fourth generation Bahá'í, in 1954. The newlyweds pioneered to the Mentawai Islands for which they were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi in 1954. In 1958, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. He died of a heart attack at the age of 56 in Ecuador.

The 25th anniversary of Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's death was marked in Ecuador by a Growth and Victories conference and graveside ceremony, including a talk by his daughter, Gisu. His daughter Gisu Mohadjer Cook works at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and lives in Potomac, Maryland. In 2012 she and her husband purchased the historic Dublin Inn in Dublin, New Hampshire where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed for three weeks in 1912, and donated it to the national Baha'i community. Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir's other daughter, Shabnam Rahnema, works as an attorney in London.

Comments

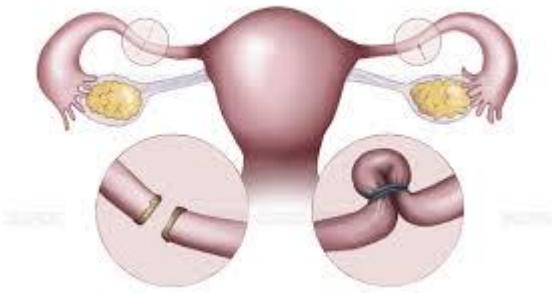
APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1978, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE RECEIVED A LETTER INQUIRING ABOUT TUBAL LIGATION, TO WHICH THEY RESPONDED "IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO HAVE A SURGICAL OPERATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF NOT HAVING MORE CHILDREN IF SUCH AN OPERATION COULD RESULT IN PERMANENT STERILITY."

April 29. On this date in 1978, the Universal House of Justice received a letter inquiring about tubal ligation, to which they responded "it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

1165. Tubal Ligation

"The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of April 29 asking about tubal ligation and has noted that you are familiar with general Bahá'í principles on the subject. However, it has directed us to say that under normal circumstances it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 28, 1978)



Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1818, CZAR ALEXANDER II WAS BORN. IN HIS SÚRIY-I-HAYKAL, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH INCLUDED THE LAWH-I-MALIK-I-RÚS, PRAISING HIM AS "HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, THE MOST GREAT EMPEROR—MAY GOD, EXALTED AND GLORIFIED BE HE, ASSIST HIM!—EXTENDED TO ME FOR THE SAKE OF GOD HIS PROTECTION ..."

April 29. On this date in 1818, Czar Alexander II was born. In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús, praising Czar Alexander II of Russia as "His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth."

On March 20, 1949, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to Karl Schuck stated that "the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!"

> 20 March 1949[to Dr. Karl Schuck]
>
> Regarding your book: he feels that this can only come under the heading, judging by the outline you gave him, of a romance woven about a historical episode: **the Báb and the events following His Martyr(dom); we do not know enough concrete facts about the relation of the Russian Court, the Russian consul, and what exact part he played in the events of those days to fill a large paragraph!** He feels, therefore, that your book should be presented as such a romance, and not in any way as a historical narrative.
>
> There were many factors at work in releasing Bahá'u'lláh from the Siyah Chal, not the last of which was the intervention of His own sister who presented very valuable gifts to the Sháh himself while she interceded for her Brother's life. So you see your information-- not merely yours, any Bahá'ís at the present time--is far too scanty to permit of a really historical account being written. This does not mean you cannot get your book out as a romance. He certainly would not want you to destroy your manuscript!

On April 8, 1853, Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdad subsequent to his arrest and exile from Iran in the aftermath of the unsuccessful assassination attempt by some Babis of the Shah . Bahá'u'lláh traveled from Iran accompanied with a representative of the Russian legation and an entourage of Russian guards.

From Helen S. Goodall, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Ella Goodall Cooper's "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908," "Exile of Bahá'u'lláh"...

> When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the **Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf**, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.
>
> **Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter,** and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.
>
> The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and **an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.* *From Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to Akka--by force He was sent to the place where He desired to be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers might have said, "Of course, He has read the prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy Land in order to mislead the people." But we see that He used the natural instruments who thought they were sending Him there by force. This is what we may call a real miracle.
>
> After all, did the Shah accomplish his will, or did Bahá'u'lláh accomplish His Will?

From Nabil's *The Dawn-breakers*, "Chapter XXVI Attempt on the Shah's Life, and its Consequences"...

> The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and **escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.**

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi alludes to the protection the Russian ambassador gave Bahá'u'lláh on different occasions, first after the attempted assassination of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar and again after the decision to exile Bahá'u'lláh from Iran, expressing his "desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia." In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the *Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús,* praising Czar Alexander II of Russia in these terms:

> when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia)—may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him!—exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the 'ulamás of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. …His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth.

Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, SHOGHI EFFENDI PLACED "A FRAGMENT OF PLASTER FROM THE CEILING OF THE BÁB'S PRISON CELL IN THE CASTLE OF MAH-KU BENEATH THE GILDED TILES OF THE DOME OF THE SHRINE."

April 29. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi placed "a fragment of plaster from the ceiling of the Báb's prison cell in the Castle of Mah-Ku beneath the gilded tiles of the dome of the Shrine."

From Bahá'í Faith, The: 1844-1963: Information Statistical and Comparative, Including the Achievements of the Ten Year International Bahá'í Teaching & Consolidation Plan 1953-1963...

> Placing of a fragment of plaster from the ceiling of the Báb's prison cell in the Castle of Mah-Ku beneath the gilded tiles of the dome of the Shrine by Shoghi Effendi on the ninth day of Ridván, April 29, 1953.

Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, AND INDIVIDUAL WROTE THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ASKING FOR A CLARIFICATION ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

April 29. On this date in 1997, and individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking for a clarification on the Authority of the Universal House of Justice.

Clarification on the Authority of the Universal House of Justice

3 JUNE 1997

To an individual believer

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email of 29 April 1997 and has instructed us to send you the following reply.

The questions you pose, arising out of an email conversation between yourself and one of the other contributors to the discussion group in which you participate, are of fundamental importance, and the House of Justice warmly appreciates the spirit of your enquiry.

The issues raised seem to resolve themselves into two points: the first being whether or not the Universal House of Justice has the authority to make authoritative interpretations; the second is whether anyone has the right to challenge the authority or actions of the Universal House of Justice. When these issues are approached with an understanding of the unity underlying all the Teachings, clarification results. Should the seeker, however, be influenced by a spirit of mistrust and conflict, then unending problems appear.

The above points have both been covered in three letters written by the Universal House of Justice on 9 March 1965, 27 May 1966 and 7 December 1969.[1] Unfortunately it seems that many of the friends have not studied these letters deeply or understood their implications. Already in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" Shoghi Effendi has shown, beyond any doubt, that the function of making authoritative interpretations of the Teachings is confined solely and exclusively to the Guardian. Neither the Universal House of Justice, nor any other institution, person or group of persons can assume that function. That the Universal House of Justice will never infringe on the functions reserved to the Guardian is shown, not only by its own words and actions, but by Shoghi Effendi's statement in that same document: "Neither can, nor will

ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other." It is guaranteed by the fact that the Universal House of Justice as well as the Guardian are both "under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One."

In its letter of 9 March 1965, the House of Justice has stated: "There is a profound difference between the interpretations of the Guardian and the elucidations of the House of Justice in exercise of its function to 'deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure, and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book.'" The friends will to understand what this difference is by observing how the House of Justice functions and by turning to it for explanations when necessary.

As you recognize, the authority of the Universal House of Justice is unchallengeable. This is stated in numerous places in the Writings. In the same passage of the Will and Testament quoted above, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá goes on to say of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice: "Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with them hath contended with God; whoso disputeth with him hath disputed with God; whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself, and turneth aside from him hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God."[2]

Furthermore, at the very end of the Will and Testament, in warning against the danger of Covenant-breaking, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote: "Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Bahá’u’lláh) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn, and open wide the door of false interpretation." In this context, He continues: "To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular conviction. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."[3]

It is natural that the friends would discuss such matters among themselves, as you and your correspondent have been doing on your Internet discussion group; how otherwise are they to deepen their understanding of the Teachings? But they should recognize that the resolution of differences of opinion on such fundamental questions is not to be found by continued discussion, but in referring to the Universal House of Justice itself, as you have done. Prolonged,

unresolved, public discussion of these fundamental questions can do nothing but breed confusion and dissension.

Some people have put forward the thesis that in place of the Guardian's function of authoritative interpretation, a check on the Universal House of Justice should be set up, either in the form of the general opinion of the mass of the believers, or in the form of a body of learned Bahá'ís—preferably those with academic qualifications. The former is in direct contradiction to the Guardian's statement that the members of the Universal House of Justice are not "allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them." "They are to follow," he writes, "the dictates and promptings of their conscience. They may, indeed they must, acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing among the community, must weigh dispassionately in their minds the merits of any case presented for their consideration, but must reserve for themselves the right of an unfettered decision. 'God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth,' is Bahá'u'lláh's incontrovertible assurance."[4] As to the latter alternative: this would constitute usurpation of a function of the Guardian.

Scholarship has a high rank in the Cause of God, and the Universal House of Justice continually consults the views of scholars and experts in the course of its work. However, as you appreciate, scholars and experts have no authority over the Institutions of the Cause. In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, on 14 March 1927, to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Istanbul, it is pointed out how, in the past, it was certain individuals who "accounted themselves as superior in knowledge and elevated in position" who caused division, and that it was those "who pretended to be the most distinguished of all" who "always proved themselves to be the source of contention." "But praise be to God" he continued, "that the Pen of Glory has done away with the unyielding and dictatorial views of the learned and the wise, dismissed the assertions of individuals as an authoritative criterion, even though they were recognized as the most accomplished and learned among men and ordained that all matters be referred to authorized centers and specified assemblies. Even so, no assembly has been invested with the absolute authority to deal with such general matters as affect the interests of nations. Nay, rather, He has brought all the assemblies together under the shadow of the one House of Justice, one divinely-appointed Center, so that there would be only one Center and all the rest integrated into a single body, revolving around one expressly-designated Pivot, thus making them all proof against schism and division."[5]

Comments have been made in recent times, implying the existence of two categories of believers, designated "administrators" and "academics." The House of Justice feels that it is

important to recognize the unsoundness of such a concept. In the nature of Bahá'í administration, there is no class of believers who serve as "administrators." Individual Bahá'ís are either elected or appointed to positions of administrative service; they come from every field of endeavor, including academia. There is, moreover, a natural flow of individuals into and out of administrative posts. The same applies to the occupants of those institutions of the Administrative Order which are referred to as being of the "learned" in the Faith. Clearly there are some Bahá'ís who are "academics" and some who are not, but "academics" in no way constitute a recognized group in relation to the structure of the Cause.

There remains the question concerning the authority for the duties and responsibilities outlined for the Universal House of Justice in its constitution. These provisions are a codification of explicit statements found in the sacred texts and the writings of Shoghi Effendi.

The House of Justice assures you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines that your efforts to assist the friends to overcome misunderstandings and to clarify their vision of the Faith will be blessed with divine confirmations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Notes ↑ MUHJ, nos. 23, 35, and 75. ↑ WT, p. 11. ↑ WT, pp. 25-26. ↑ WOB, p. 153. ↑ MUHJ, no. 111.12.

Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "...IT IS SPIRIT, DETERMINATION, FAITH AND DEVOTION WHICH BRING VICTORIES INTO BEING, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, IN BRITAIN, AND NOT LUXURY AND LEISURE...."

April 29. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...it is spirit, determination, faith and devotion which bring victories into being, one after another, in Britain, and not luxury and leisure...."

> 1964. ...it is spirit, determination, faith and devotion which bring victories into being, one after another, in Britain, and not luxury and leisure....
>
> (From a letter dated 29 April 1948 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles)

Comments

APRIL 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1921, ADIB TEHERZADEH WAS BORN. HE SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE NSA OF THE BRITISH ISLES FROM 1960 TO 1971 AND LATER OF THE NSA OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND FROM 1972 TO 1976, WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED A COUNSELLOR FOR EUROPE. FROM 1988 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 2000 HE SERVED ON THE UHJ

April 29. On this date in 1921, Adib Taherzadeh was born in Yazd, Iran. He served as a member of the NSA of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971 and later of the NSA of the Republic of Ireland from 1972 to 1976, when he was appointed a Counsellor for Europe. From 1988 until his death in 2000, Adib Taherzadeh served on the UHJ.

Adib Taherzadeh was born on April 29, 1921, in Yazd, Iran, into a family who had a strong association with the Bahá'í Faith since its inception. He studied electrical engineering at the University of Tehran, and then moved to Coventry, England in 1948 and pursued advanced studies. He moved to Ireland in 1950 working as the chief engineer of an industrial concern until 1988. He married twice, first to Zarin Moosezadeh Cohen with whom he had two children, a son Tahir Ronald and a daughter Bahiyyeh Vida. He married Belfast-born Lesley Gibson in the 1970s, and they had two children, a daughter Maryam (Baskin) and a son Bahhaj. At the time of his death, he had several grandchildren.

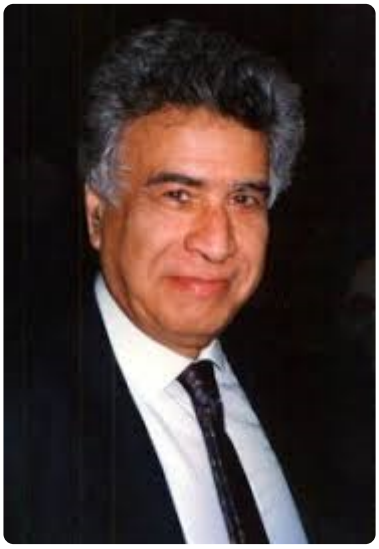
Taherzadeh served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles from 1960 to 1971. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Republic of Ireland when it was formed in 1972 and was appointed in 1976 to the European Continental Board of Counsellors. He was elected to the Universal House of Justice in 1988. A prolific writer and gifted public speaker, Taherzadeh wrote several books on the Bahá'í history and teachings, including *The Child of the Covenant*, *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*, and the four volume *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders generally as if not more authoritarian than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites:

1. State that religion no longer needs clergy……and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was.
2. Claim that men and women should be equal……but then deny women membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.
3. Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.
4. Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true, even if on topics science is expected to address.

Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions



Comments

According-Outside535: Unfortunately this is a rather biased account of what truly is a most marvellous religion. The author appears to be rather uneducated in the deeper aspects of the Faith and has not become fully aware of many of the somewhat hidden verities of it. Some of the statements are most definitely not very correct and could be rather misleading to some of

those who would not be fully aware of the deeper truths that come to be better understood after deeper study and reflection.

BAHA'I HISTORY - APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, R. JACKSON ARMSTRONG-INGRAM, BAHÁ'Í AUTHOR, ARCHIVIST, AND COMPOSER, WAS BORN IN BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND.

April 30. On this date in 1954, R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram, a Bahá'í author, archivist, and composer, was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The following obituary was published in the "South Bend Tribune"...

> Obituary: R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram:
>
> April 30, 1954 - Oct. 21, 2004
>
> Oct. 21, 2004, R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram died in Henderson, Nevada.
>
> He was born on April 30, 1954, to Richard and Margaret "Min" Armstrong-Ingram in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He left school and educated himself to the degree that he was able to get a B.A. from Goshen College in one year, graduating in 1978. He married Karen L. Eggermont of South Bend, Indiana, on September 26, 1976.
>
> His first son, Conan, was born on September 1, 1977, in Goshen, Indiana. After a move to Belfast, Northern Ireland. Tiernan was born on December 13, 1978. In 1982 the family moved to Evanston, Illinois, and Jackson worked at the Bahá'í House of Worship Archives in Wilmette. After a move to South Bend, Indiana, he spent some time working for a telephone survey company. In 1991, he set up the St. Joseph County Archives in South Bend, supervising two moves in almost as many years. Jackson worked with a variety of record holders in the area, including St. Mary's College and the St. Joseph County Public Library Genealogy Room. During this time, he received his Archive Certification from the Illinois Historical Society, Chicago. In addition, Jackson taught evening Cultural Anthropology courses as an adjunct at Indiana University South Bend from 1993-1997.
>
> In 1997, Jackson moved to Carson City, Nevada, to continue archival work at the State Archives, becoming the state's first Electronic Records Archivist from July to October of 1999. After working as Archivist and Records Administrator for the city of Henderson, Nevada, from 1999 to the end of 2001, he became State Archivist for the state of Alaska in 2002. Health problems forced a return to Henderson

where he continued to free-lace as an editor, consultant, and author for Kalimat Press, as well as a lecturer and consultant to other organizations. He wrote two books on Bahá'í subjects for Kalimat Press: *Written in Light: Abdu'L-Baha and the American Bahá'í Community, 1998-1921* (1998) and *Studies in Babi and Bahá'í History: Music, Devotions, and Mashriq'L-Adkhar* (1988). In 2002, he published a book on Henderson, Nevada, entitled *Images of America: Henderson.* His work on electronic archives includes Digital Imaging Guidelines for Nevada Libraries and Archives (2003). His writing is considered of importance by many in the archive field who hold him in high regard from Alaska to Amsterdam. Jackson's papers will be housed in three separate archives: the archival work at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.; his writing on Middle Eastern Studies at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the remainder at Kalimat Press in Los Angeles, California.

He is survived by his two sons; two grandsons, Owen and Albert; and his ex-wife, all of South Bend, Indiana. He is also survived in Northern Ireland by his mother, sister, Rosemary Hunter; two nephews, Richard and David Hunter; a niece, Nicola Ingram; and a brother, Trevor, presently in England.

Jackson was a highly intelligent and creative individual who loved knowledge for its own sake. In his teens, he performed puppet shows for school children, limiting himself to puppets without strings using muppet-like creatures, as well as Chinese and Balinese puppets. After his marriage, he composed a melody to his wife, and, in 1983, a composition of his was performed at the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois. Reading and writing were his favorite past-times. He enjoyed good conversation, good music, and loved nothing better than to expound on what he learned to a rapt audience. He will be remembered by those who knew and loved him, for his tender heart, his love of learning, and his laughter. May he rest in gentle peace with God.

Comments

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ GAVE A TALK TITLED "THE TEMPLE" AT BAHÁ'Í TEMPLE UNITY (THE FORERUNNER OF THE NSA OF THE U.S.), AT ITS CONVENTION HELD AT THE MASONIC TEMPLE IN CHICAGO.

April 30. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk titled "The Temple" at Bahá'í Temple Unity (the forerunner of the NSA of the U.S.), at its Convention held at the Masonic Temple in Chicago.

THE TEMPLE

650. Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of the Divine Temple. That is to say, an edifice is to be constructed in order that humanity may find therein a place of meeting; and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship amongst them. The real Temple is the very Law of God, for to that all humanity must resort, and that is the Point of Unity for all mankind. That is the collective center. That is the cause of accord and unity of the hearts. That is the cause of the solidarity of the human race. There is the source of eternal life. Temples are the symbols of that uniting force, in order that when people gather there in a given edifice of God, in the House and Temple of God, they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that that law is to unite them. That just as this edifice was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating this Temple was issued therefor. ... In brief, the purpose of places of worship and edifices for adoration is simply that of unity, in order that various nations, divergent races, varying souls, may gather there and among them amity, love and accord may be realized. The original purpose is this.

That is why **His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions and races and sects may gather together;** that the oneness of the human world may be proclaimed; that all the human race are the servants of God, and all are submerged in the ocean of God's mercy. The world of existence may be likened to this. It is the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Just as the external world is a place where various peoples of different hues and colors, of various faiths and denominations, meet; just as they are submerged in the same Sea of Favors; likewise all may meet under the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and adore the One God in the same spirit of truth, for the ages of darkness have passed away and the century of light has come. The prejudices of imagination are in the process of dispersion

and the Light of Unity is shining. The difference which exists among the nations and the peoples is soon to pass away, and the fundamentals of the Divine Religions, which are no other than the solidarity and the oneness of the human race, are to be established. For six thousand years the human race has been at war. It is enough! Now let them, for a time at least, consort in unity. Formerly they entertained enmity. Let them for a period exercise love. For six thousand years have they negated each other, each nation considering the other as infidel. It is sufficient! We must know that we are the servants of One God; that we are turning to One God; that we have one kind Father; that we have one divine Law; that we have one reality; that we have one desire. Thus may we live together in the utmost of amity and love, and for this love, for this amity, the favors of God shall surround us; the world of humanity will be reformed; human kind will find a new life; eternal light shall shine; merciful and heavenly morals shall become manifested. The Divine policies shall rule, for the Divine policy is the oneness of the human world. God is kind to all. He considers all as His servants. He does not exclude anybody, and the policy of God is the correct and just policy. No matter how complete human policy and foresight be, it is imperfect.

If we do not emulate the policy of God, or if we refuse to follow His dictates, that will be a presumptive evidence of our saying, as it were, that we know better than God; that we are knowing and wise, whereas God is ignorant; that we are sagacious, while God is not. God forbid! We seek shelter in God's mercy therefor! No matter how far the human intelligence shall advance, it is still as a drop, whereas the Divine Omniscience is the very ocean. Is it just for us to say that a drop is imbued or endowed with qualities whereof the ocean itself is minus or not endowed? To say that the policy of the atom or the drop is greater and superior to that of the ocean? There is no greater ignorance than this! At most it is this: that there are some people like unto children. They are ignorant, and with the utmost love are we to educate them in order that they may become wise. They are sick; they are ill. We must tenderly care for them and treat them until they become well. Their morals are unpraiseworthy. We must train them in order that they may become imbued with morals that are commendable. Otherwise we are all the servants of One God, and we are beneath the protection and institutes of One God.

These are the institutes of God and the foundations of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, or His Temple. The outer edifice is a symbol of the inner. May the people be admonished thereby! I pray in your behalf, that your hearts may be enlightened with the light of the love of God; that your minds may develop daily; that your spirits may be set aglow with the fire of His Glad Tidings; until the divine foundations in the human world may become promulgated. And the first of these

institutions is the oneness of the human world and love among all mankind, and secondly is the Most Great Peace.

Praise be to God, this American Democracy presents capacity, showing forth its readiness to become the flag bearer of the Most Great Peace. May they be the hosts of the oneness of humanity. May its people serve the threshold of God and promulgate that which is the good pleasure of God!

Bahá'í Temple Unity

Convention Masonic Temple, Chicago

April 30, 1912.

Comments

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1911, DURING HIS PILGRIMAGE, LOUIS G. GREGORY RECORDED THAT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ BLESSED "TOKENS INTENDED FOR THE FRIENDS IN THE WEST," ASSERTED THAT "THE TIME FIXED WHEN THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY ALL MEN, BECOMING UNIVERSAL" ADDING "... END OF THE FIRST CENTURY."

April 30. On this date in 1911, during his pilgrimage, Louis G. Gregory recorded that 'Abdu'l-Bahá blessed "tokens intended for the friends in the West," defined "The light is of four kinds," and asserted that "the time fixed when the Bahá'í teachings will be accepted by all men, becoming universal" adding "Think of what may happen by the end of the first century."

> April 30. Today 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked to bless certain Greatest Name stones and other tokens intended for the friends in the West. He handled each of them, expressing admiration, afterwards adding something to the collection. He was questioned as to the reality of a story related by a young Episcopal clergyman, that on one occasion he saw Mirza Abul Fazl surrounded by a halo, as he taught the people at Green Acre, Maine. He said: **"The light is of four kinds: First**, the light of the sun. It reveals objects to our perception, but cannot itself realize them. **Second**, the light of the eye. It can realize objects, but cannot understand them. **Third**, the light of wisdom. This both realizes and understands objects. **Fourth**, the Light of Guidance. This is the Supreme Light, the conscious Reality which comprehends mysteries." Can this last ever be cognizable through the special senses, as the eye? "By the insight," He answered. **Is the time fixed when the Bahá'í teachings will be accepted by all men, becoming universal? "You may be sure of that.** The Cause is now known in all parts of the world, although more firmly established in some parts than others. Compare this with previous revelations and the time of their spread. Three hundred years after Christ His teachings were only known through Judea and a part of Europe. But now this Movement is only about sixty-seven years (A.D. 1911) old. **Think of what may happen by the end of the first century."**

Comments

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1987, THE UHJ ANNOUNCED THAT "THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE SIGNED AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT WHOSE IMPLICATIONS—SPIRITUAL, HISTORICAL, AND PRACTICAL—ARE INESTIMABLE FOR THE RAPIDLY EVOLVING WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH."

April 30. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter stating "after decades of unabated effort involving prolonged, delicate negotiations, the Government of the State of Israel and the Bahá'í World Centre signed an international agreement whose implications-spiritual, historical, and practical-are inestimable for the rapidly evolving World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 30 April 1987
>
> To the Bahá'ís of the World
>
> Dearly loved Friends,
>
> This Riḍván, after decades of unabated effort involving prolonged, delicate negotiations, the Government of the State of Israel and the Bahá'í World Centre signed an international agreement whose implications—spiritual, historical, and practical—are inestimable for the rapidly evolving World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
>
> Approved by unanimous vote of the Cabinet of the National Unity Government, the Agreement states as reasons for the Government's concurrence in it the "friendly relations between the Bahá'í world community and the State of Israel" and the "desire of the Government of Israel to give effect to this relationship, and to its recognition of the special status of the Bahá'í World Centre." These friendly relations trace their foundation to the inspired initiatives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, particularly during the period following the Revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 when a general amnesty was effected for religious and political prisoners held under the old regime. The prestige acquired by the Faith through the dynamic force of the Master's unique spirit was demonstrated after His release from imprisonment in the

actions He took to establish His residence in Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel, to inter the sacred remains of the Báb in the mausoleum which had been erected by Him on the spot designated by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and to travel extensively in the West. Subsequent to these travels, it was more conspicuously illustrated through the excellent relations He forged with high and low alike, the social impact of His liberal ministrations to the needs of the people in the Holy Land, and the conferring of a knighthood upon Him by the British Crown.

This legacy of prestige was evident in the recognition accorded Shoghi Effendi as Head of the Faith by the authorities of the British Mandate. The extent of the Guardian's energetic exertions to achieve recognition of the independent status of the Faith, whose permanent spiritual and administrative centers are in the Holy Land, is beyond the scope of this letter and must, in due time, be afforded full treatment in the work of future historians. Let it suffice to reaffirm here that what he was able to accomplish during the years of the Mandate, in securing custody of Bahá'í properties and in obtaining official protection of the Holy Places, recognition of the Bahá'í marriage certificate and of Bahá'í Holy Days, and relief from certain taxes, combined to reflect a status for the Faith which was accepted by the new Government when the State of Israel was established in 1948. Writing on Shoghi Effendi's behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly on 30 May 1952, his secretary stated that "All the Bahá'í properties and imports are exempt from taxation and customs, and the status of the Faith as a religion, recognized." However, the letter pointed out that "At present, we are planning to clarify our legal position with the Government, and get it on a more concrete footing." It is precisely in fulfilling the need for such clarification and more concrete footing that the instrument recently signed in Jerusalem represents a distinctive stage in the relations of the Bahá'í World Centre with the Government of this country.

In a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry on 22 April 1987, the second day of Riḍván, the Agreement, comprising an exchange of letters, was signed by Mr. Shimon Peres, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, on behalf of the Government of Israel, and Mr. Donald Barrett, Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community, on behalf of the Bahá'í World Centre, in the presence of other high-ranking government officials and Mr. Ronald Bates, Deputy Secretary-General of the Bahá'í International Community. Among its contents are the following statements of recognition:

> The Government of Israel recognizes the members of the Bahá'í Faith as a recognized religious community in Israel in accordance with Article 2 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922–1947, and confirms that the Bahá'í World Centre is the world spiritual and administrative center of the Bahá'í world community and that the Universal House of Justice in Haifa is the Head of the Bahá'í Faith and its Supreme Institution in accordance with its Constitution.
>
> The Government of Israel recognizes that the holiest places of the Bahá'í Faith, in accordance with the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures, are located in Israel, and confirms that the Universal House of Justice is the Trustee of the Bahá'í International Community over the Holy Places of the Bahá'í Faith in Israel and over the Bahá'í endowments in Israel.

From such clearly stated recognition flow privileges and benefits befitting the spiritual and administrative center of a world Faith. These provisions of the Agreement are defined in terms that are renewable or renegotiable at certain intervals, lending a flexibility and extension to the Agreement that are among its salient features. The Agreement can thus be regarded as the culmination of a series of preliminary measures of official recognition variously granted by sundry governmental authorities over a span of decades, now confirmed, amplified, extended, and defined in an instrument which places the operation of the Bahá'í World Centre on a solid basis in its relations with the Government of Israel and in its other external relations. It thus launches a new phase in the development of the administration of the Faith at its World Center.

Of unusual importance—and fraught with implications for the future dealings of the Bahá'í community everywhere as the Faith passes through the stages of its evolution until its stature is fully acclaimed by the nations—is the nature of the final negotiations, which engaged our representatives in extensive consultations with highly placed officials, and from which emerged the procedure for sealing the Agreement. For it is a singular fact that the representative of a sovereign government, in the person of its Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, and the representative of what was justifiably acknowledged as the "world center of a recognized international non-governmental organization" sat down together to sign

an "International Agreement," the first such occurrence in the history of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

That this should have taken place in the Holy Land, to which only some 120 years ago the Founder of that Cause was banished as a prisoner, evokes in us feelings of wonderment and astonished joy. That the Government which was party to so unprecedented an act happens to be that of a people who have only recently returned, after many centuries of exile, to their homeland bespeaks a token of divine favor of incalculable spiritual and historical importance for the Jewish people.

Dear Friends, the Status Agreement now achieved makes an indelible mark on the Formative Age of our Faith, assuming a special place among the swiftly accumulating evidences of the divine confirmations which have thus far distinguished the opening period of the fourth epoch of that Age. These accompanying signs of God's abounding grace clearly include:

- The Conference of Continental Counselors at the World Center at the close of which on 2 January 1986 was announced the opening of the fourth epoch

- The establishment in Jerusalem of an Office of Representation for the Bahá'í International Community to facilitate the relations of the World Center with the Government of Israel.

- The successful conclusion of the Seven Year Plan, unforgettable for the stature the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh attained betokening its emergence from obscurity—an emergence resulting largely from the indescribable sacrifices of the beloved friends in Iran.

- The completion of the distribution of *The Promise of World Peace* to heads of state and the outstanding events associated with the promulgation of its contents.

- The launching of the Six Year Plan which incorporated the feature of planning involving the consultation of Continental Counselors with National Spiritual Assemblies, and to a large extent, consultation at the grass roots of the national Bahá'í communities, leading to the choice of goals for their countries by these National Spiritual Assemblies.

• The first visit of a head of government to the World Center to consult with the Universal House of Justice on issues raised in its Peace Statement.

• The participation of Bahá'í publishers in an International Book Fair in the capital of the People's Republic of China.

• The dedication of the Mother Temple of the Indian sub-continent, an event which opened new opportunities for the Faith to be proclaimed in the Soviet Union, Eastern bloc countries, and China, and which has induced the visits of high-ranking officials from these and other countries to the Temple.

• The establishment in Liberia of the first Bahá'í radio station on the continent of Africa.

• The adoption of the design created by Mr. Ḥusayn Amánat for the complex of edifices remaining to be constructed on the Arc on Mount Carmel.

One practical and spiritually confirming effect of the signing of the Status Agreement) is that it brings us within reach of the realization of the beloved Guardian's vision for the Arc on God's Holy Mountain. For with the Agreement in hand formidable obstacles to the execution of the Arc Project have been removed. The conjunction of the completion of the architect's design and the favorable action of the Government thus signals the ripeness of the time to pursue the obligation acutely felt by the entire Bahá'í world to bring to fruition, as soon as possible, the work begun by Shoghi Effendi in the erection of the Archives Building and carried forward in the completion four years ago of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. The plans to be made and the material requirements for so extraordinary an undertaking will, of course, be communicated to the friends in due course. In the meantime, we are happy to announce that the architect of the Indian Temple, Mr. Fariborz Sahba has been assigned the task of designing the Terraces to be situated below and above the Shrine of the Báb; he has also been appointed Project Manager to execute the design already adopted for the three remaining buildings on the Arc.

We rejoice to know that the entire company of Bahá'u'lláh's loved ones joins us in prayers of thanksgiving for the manifold blessings He is showering in such profusion on the humble efforts being made in His glorious Name.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1992, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "THE PAYMENT OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH IS A PERSONAL OBLIGATION ON EACH BAHÁ'Í, AND IT IS FOR HIM TO MEET THIS OBLIGATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS OWN CONSCIENCE; IT CANNOT BE DEMANDED FROM HIM BY ANY OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE FAITH."

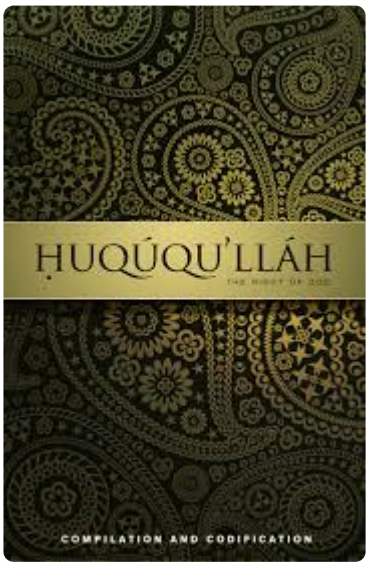
April 30. On this date in 1992, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The payment of Huqúqu'lláh is a personal obligation on each Bahá'í, and it is for him to meet this obligation in accordance with his own conscience; it cannot be demanded from him by any of the institutions of the Faith."

69. "The payment of Huqúqu'lláh is a personal obligation on…"

> The payment of Huqúqu'lláh is a personal obligation on each Bahá'í, and it is for him to meet this obligation in accordance with his own conscience; it cannot be demanded from him by any of the institutions of the Faith. A part of this obligation is for a Bahá'í to make provision in his will for the payment of whatever remains of his debt to Huqúqu'lláh at the end of his life. The Bahá'í law of intestacy, likewise, provides for the payment of such a balance of Huqúqu'lláh before the distribution of the estate to the heirs.
>
> The Law of Inheritance as revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which is applicable when the deceased has left no will, is explicit in stating:
>
> Division of the estate should take place only after the Huqúqu'lláh hath been paid….
>
> Likewise, in relation to the making of a Will, Bahá'u'lláh has stated:
>
> A person hath full jurisdiction over his property. If he is able to discharge the Huqúqu'lláh, and is free of debt, then all that is recorded in his will, and any declaration or avowal it containeth, shall be acceptable. God, verily, hath permitted him to deal with that which He hath bestowed upon him in whatever manner he may desire.

This makes it clear that the responsibility of a testator to pay his debts and his Huqúqu'lláh have precedence over his freedom to leave his property in whatever other manner he wishes.

(30 April 1992, memorandum from the Universal House of Justice to a department at the Bahá'í World Centre)



Comments

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1963, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, WHICH HAD JUST BEEN CONSTITUTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON APRIL 23, 1963, ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE FIRST BAHÁ'Í WORLD CONGRESS UNDERWAY IN LONDON.

April 30. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice, which had just been constituted at the conclusion of the First International Convention on April 23, 1963, addressed a letter to the First Bahá'í World Congress underway in London.

> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 30 April 1963
>
> [To the First Bahá'í World Congress]
>
> "All praise, O my God, be to Thee Who art the Source of all glory and majesty, of greatness and honor, of sovereignty and dominion, of loftiness and grace, of awe and power. Whomsoever Thou willest Thou causest to draw nigh unto the Most Great Ocean, and on whomsoever Thou desirest Thou conferrest the honor of recognizing Thy Most Ancient Name. Of all who are in heaven and on earth, none can withstand the operation of Thy sovereign Will. From all eternity Thou didst rule the entire creation, and Thou wilt continue for evermore to exercise Thy dominion over all created things. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise."
>
> Beloved friends: On this glorious occasion, the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee, we raise our grateful thanks to Bahá'u'lláh for all His bounties showered upon the friends throughout the world. This historic moment marks at one and the same time the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, the Hundredth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Promised One of all ages, the termination of the first epoch of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá designed to establish the Faith of God in all the world, and the successful conclusion of our beloved Guardian's world-encircling Crusade, enabling his lovers and loved ones everywhere to lay this glorious harvest of victory in his name at the feet of the Blessed Beauty. This Most Great Jubilee is the crowning victory of the lifework of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Cause of

God. He it was, and he alone, who unfolded the potentialities of the widely scattered, numerically small, and largely unorganized Bahá'í community which had been called into being during the Heroic Age of the Faith. He it was who unfolded the grand design of God's Holy Cause, set in motion the great plans of teaching already outlined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, established the institutions and greatly extended the endowments at the World Center, and raised the Temples of America, Africa, Australasia and Europe, developed the Administrative Order of the Cause throughout the world, and set the Ark of the Cause true on its course. He appointed the Hands of the Cause of God.

The paeans of joy and gratitude, of love and adoration which we now raise to the throne of Bahá'u'lláh would be inadequate, and the celebrations of this Most Great Jubilee in which, as promised by our beloved Guardian, we are now engaged, would be marred were no tribute paid at this time to the Hands of the Cause of God. For they share the victory with their beloved commander, he who raised them up and appointed them. They kept the ship on its course and brought it safe to port. The Universal House of Justice, with pride and love, recalls on this supreme occasion its profound admiration for the heroic work which they have accomplished. We do not wish to dwell on the appalling dangers which faced the infant Cause when it was suddenly deprived of our beloved Shoghi Effendi, but rather to acknowledge with all the love and gratitude of our hearts the reality of the sacrifice, the labor, the self-discipline, the superb stewardship of the Hands of the Cause of God. We can think of no more fitting words to express our tribute to these dearly loved and valiant souls than to recall the Words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself: "Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained, through whom the ocean of bounty hath surged and the fragrance of the gracious favors of God, the Lord of mankind, hath been diffused."

The members of the Universal House of Justice, all being in Haifa at the time of the election, were able to visit the Holy Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá where they prostrated themselves at the Sacred Thresholds and humbly sought strength and assistance in the mighty task before them. Later in London they have paid homage at the resting-place of Shoghi Effendi, the blessed and sacred bough of the Tree of Holiness.

> As soon as the House of Justice is able to organize its work and deploy its forces it will examine carefully all the conditions of the Cause of God, and communications will be made to the friends. At this time we call upon the believers everywhere to follow up vigorously the opportunities opened up by the World Crusade. Consolidation and deepening must go hand in hand with an eager extension of the teaching work so that the onward march of the Cause may continue unabated in preparation for future plans. Now that the attention of the public is becoming more and more drawn to the Cause of God the friends must brace themselves and prepare their institutions to sustain the gaze of the world, whether it be friendly or hostile, eager or idle.
>
> The Universal House of Justice greets you all lovingly and joyfully at this time, and asks you to pray fervently for its speedy development and the spiritual strengthening of its members.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served

as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.
Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

Sertorius126: Epic statement

APRIL 30. ON THIS DATE IN 2018, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD NEWS SERVICE ANNOUNCED "UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ELECTED." THE RESULTS WERE EASILY PREDICTED, AND THE NEXT MEMBER TO BE ELECTED TO THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WILL BE ANDREJ DONOVAL.

April 30. On this date in 2018, the Bahá'í World News Service announced "Universal House of Justice elected." The results were easily predicted, and the next member to be elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval.

How does membership in the International Teaching Centre lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the International Teaching Centre by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the Bahá'í electoral system, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall. Stephen Birkland was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, Stephen Birkland attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"

In that period, Stephen Hall attended the following Bahá'í Regional Conferences...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 15-16, 2008	Bangui, Central African Republic
November 22-23, 2008	Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
November 29-30, 2008	Yaoundé, Cameroon
December 6-7, 2008	Portland, Oregon, United States of America
December 13-14, 2008	Stamford, Connecticut, United States of America
January 3-4, 2009	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
January 17-18, 2009	Lae, Papua New Guinea
January 24-25, 2009	Sydney, Australia
January 31-February 1, 2009	Auckland, New Zealand
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany

Source: Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Hall"

No other Bahá'ís receive as much exposure to electors of the Universal House of Justice as do members of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

When the Universal House of Justice appoints members to the International Teaching Centre, they are in fact selecting their own replacements.

In the Bahá'í electoral system, with no overt campaigning and politicking permitted, the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. The nine members of the International Teaching Centre routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice. In fact, every single one of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as a Counsellor member of the International Teaching Centre.

With the turnover of the Universal House of Justice's nine members and with the International Teaching Centre's being composed of nine members, some of whom are women and therefore ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice, a man's appointment to the International Teaching Centre serves as a presumption to eventual election to the Universal House of Justice.

To illustrate further, in a letter dated October 20, 2008, the Universal House of Justice called for a series of 41 Regional Conferences intended to mark the mid-point of the Five Year Plan and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the Plan upon returning home. The Regional Conferences were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

Each of the 41 Regional Conferences was attended by two Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre with the exception of the Conference held at Uvira, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had only one representative. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre at the time of the Regional Conferences were Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, Stephen Birkland, Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker.

Of this cohort of Counsellors, the five lady members (Zenaida Ramirez, Joan Lincoln, Rachel Ndegwa, Uransaikhan Baatar, and Penelope Walker) were ineligible for election to the Universal House of Justice.

Of the four male members at the time of the 41 Regional Conferences (Juan Francisco Mora, Ayman Rouhani, Stephen Hall, and Stephen Birkland), all have been elected to the Universal House of Justice.

In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost

invariably serve until retirement or death. In the people's democracies of the Eastern Bloc, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

The next member elected to the Universal House of Justice will be Andrej Donoval, who is the longest tenured male member of the International Teaching Centre, having been appointed to that body in 2013.

Gustavo Correa is the husband of Haleh Arbab and brother-in-law of Farzam Arbab. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice in 2008, Correa was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2005. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

Born in Tehran, Iran on October 27, 1941, **Farzam Arbab** would go on to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College in 1964 and a Doctor of Philosophy in physics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1968. Shortly after earning his doctorate, Arbab moved to Colombia where he quickly established himself in the leadership in the Bahá'í community of that country and by 1970 was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. While in Colombia he helped found Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC).

Initially elected in 1993 to the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, Farzam Arbab retired from that body in 2013. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 1988, he was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. The International Teaching Centre, whose seat is at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel, is composed of nine Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice and tasked with duties to stimulate and coordinate the Continental Board of Counselors and assist the Universal House of Justice in matters relating to the teaching and protection of the faith. All of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In 1980 he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Protection and Propagation of the Faith in the Americas, on which he served for eight years. From 1970 until 1980 he served as the Chairman for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia. In 1980, while still a Counsellor, Arbab was on the initial board of directors for the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í School in Haiti.

Farzam Arbab's son, **Paul Arbab**, is administrator at the Luxembourg-based Unity Foundation, which works with Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and "a network of local development agencies assisting them in their efforts to build capacity amongst populations to take charge of their own social and economic development." "Born in the US, Paul grew up in

Colombia. He holds an MBA and joined the board of Unity Foundation in January 2007. Since then he has been able to provide valuable input to the strategic direction of the Foundation. He is a proud father of two toddlers and strongly believes in the power of education." Unity Foundation is "governed by a board of directors which regularly meets to consult on the strategic direction of the organization. The day-to-day work is being carried out by the office team. Our external consultancy body, the Office of Social and Economic Development (OSED) in Haifa, Israel connects us to grass-root development agencies which have the capacity to work with external funding organization. OSED and the [Luxembourg] Ministry of Foreign Affairs act as two filters ensuring the quality and integrity of our projects."

Farzam Arbab's sister, **Haleh Arbab**, is currently director of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a non-profit educational and research organization "dedicated to building capacity in individuals, groups and institutions to contribute to prevalent discourses concerned with the betterment of society" through "working in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community." Born in Iran and educated in the United States, Haleh Arbab previously lived in Colombia from 1982 to 2005 where she worked with the Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences (FUNDAEC) and served as Rector of Centro Universitario de Bienestar Rural, a Colombian Bahá'í-inspired institute she helped found in 1988.

Farzam Arbab's brother-in-law, Haleh Arbab's husband, is **Gustavo Correa** who himself has been a member of the Universal House of Justice since 2008. Before his election to the Universal House of Justice, in 2005, Correa was appointed to the International Teaching Centre. Along with his brother-in-law, Farzam Arbab, Gustavo Correa was one of the founders of FUNDAEC and later served as its Director, the position currently held by his daughter, Bita Correa.

Farzam Arab's niece, **Bita Correa**, is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. Aside from being FUNDAEC's current program director, Bita Correa participated as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to the 55th United Nations Commission for Social Development. A recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, Bita Correa is the daughter of Haleh Arbab, Farzam Arbab's sister, and Gustavo Correa.

Farzam Arbab was one of the founders of FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences). He served as its Director from 1974 through 1988 and continues to serve on its board. FUNDAEC was established in 1974 by a group of professors at the University of Valle in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country. In 2002, the Club of

Budapest recognized FUNDAEC's new rural education model. The model, known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, Spanish for "System for Tutorial Learning") started in 1980 and centers on the use of interactive workbooks facilitated by a tutor. In Colombia, these tutors are trained at the Center for Rural Education.

The SAT techniques Arbab helped develop at FUNDAEC have been applied to the Bahá'í community in the form of the Ruhi Institute, which was named after Arbab's father. Centered on Bahá'í study circles, the goal of the Ruhi Institute courses is to "evoke a transformative learning experience through a learner-centered, experiential, and collaborative approach facilitated by a tutor rather than an instructor, a teacher, or an expert." Among the principles of the Ruhi curriculum is the utilization of service projects to implement learning into tangible action.

The Universal House of Justice has encouraged the emulation of the Ruhi model throughout the global Bahá'í community. According to one researcher, the Ruhi Institute's method has resulted in "nonhierarchical, self-initiated, self-organized small groups engaged in study, teaching, and action" and is "becoming the core of Bahá'í community life worldwide as the outcome of a process that has sought to nurture the spiritual life of individuals and families and to establish social foundations for the vision and practice of religious world citizenship." Paul Lample, another member of the Universal Hose of Justice, has stated "Doubtless the institute and its curriculum will continue to evolve, both in content and form, to a level of greater complexity in regions and nations within the framework of the administrative order throughout the various stages of the Divine Plan in the second century of the Formative Age."

For a number of years now, Unity Foundation has collaborated with FUNDAEC and "since June 2013, Unity Foundation has renewed its collaboration with FUNDAEC."

On September 25, 2020, Farzam Arbab died in San Diego, California.

Comments